

# THE GRAMOPHONE

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## SOME PROBLEMS

By THE EDITOR

Extract from Y's letter :—

Few of us are able to walk into a shop, ask to hear a particular quartet, find it unsatisfactorily recorded, and walk out again without buying the records. Only those who are regular and known customers of such firms as Imhof's can do this. The rest of us have our local dealers, who may have to get these more expensive records specially for us. We have to order on somebody's recommendation, and if that critic has to confine his criticism to a few lines, we are the sufferers.

As an instance I mention the H.M.V. records of Beethoven's Op. 59, No. 3. From your cramped review it seemed apparent that there is only one flaw in this set, which is the playing of one note out of tune by the leader. I decided to get the set, but as an afterthought I ordered it on approval together with the Columbia set of the same music. Now, neither of these sets comes up to the standard set by the Schubert *Trio* or the H.M.V. *Kreutzer*. I don't think either of them are worth 26s. of my money, but I've got to have one. The viola of the H.M.V. set is horrible, no better than the viola on the old recording (say Schumann Quintet, Voc.). The tone as a whole does not compare at all well with the Columbia version in which the viola when audible is magnificent, but the 'cello either faint or missing. Why is this? Surely if we can get such glorious 'cello recording as the 4s. 6d. Scala record of a

Bach Adagio and the Delius 'Cello Sonata (H.M.V.) we can have an audible 'cello in a quartet.

I hardly like to open another topic, but my heart is full of Mr. Mackenzie's statement that he is preparing an article on Beethoven. Please don't let him. Make him confine himself to his balalaika orchestras and such-like toys, and leave music to men like "K. K." I have no desire to offend anyone, but surely it is obvious that Mr. Mackenzie is not a musician in any sense of the word. So I plead for less "C. M." and much more "K. K." I don't know who he is, but I am a very profound and humble admirer of him since his remarks on the Jazz-Classics controversy in the December, 1926, issue.

Extract from X's letter :—

We are suffering at present on the gramophone from too much backsliding about wireless reception. "Z." has spent so much money in the effort to "hear the conductor tap his foot for them to get ready" that he tells me that he can't afford any records. I am in utter dejection about the uses of criticism or individual opinion. I have been hearing a lot of quartet music lately and when I got those Virtuoso records I honestly thought that we had got as near the real thing as I had ever hoped for. Op 18, No. 6, especially seemed to me to be as like a string quartet, with even the first and second



violin tone pretty true, as anything could be. On the other hand I went wearily through the whole twelve Leners and found all hollow, nearly as bad as the single movement of the Tchaikovsky which was recorded in the same Wigmore Hall. I can't make the violin tone anything like true and a suspicion that the land line is all wrong, and emphasises the middle register, would seem to be confirmed by the fact that for the first time the viola and second violin come into their own, which they never do in the actual performance of the Lener. Then I get my GRAMOPHONE and read that "P. L." thinks the recording almost ideal and superior to the Virtuoso. True he arrives at his conclusions with an H.M.V. cabinet and loud steel needles, while I used a big horn and fibres, but I feel certain that no steel needle could make me think the Lener records sound like a string quartet and when someone at Frith Street put on a Virtuoso record with a Petmecky or whatever they are called I asked them for pity's sake to take it off. It can't be merely cussedness, but "P. L." is presumably a musician and I have been going to quartet recitals for about thirty years, so obviously one of us is a case for an aurist. I heard the Flonzaley playing Beethoven's Op. 95 the other night and it sounded as different as possible to the Lener's version and "Q." who was in a seat near by was eloquent on the subject. He opines that the Lener are "sweetly pretty but not Beethoven," and attributes their success to fashion and social causes evidenced by the circumstance that audiences at the Queen's Hall concerts were composed of nine-tenths women. I think you are absolutely right in chastising those who attribute lack of success in the concert world to the wireless craze. Can you conceive anyone who is a potential concert goer being content with hearing it on the wireless *instead*? I believe it is simply inability to give us what we want that is at the bottom of the failures. They try to please too many tastes at once and make the concerts far too long. Half the beauty of quartet recitals is that you know there will be nothing to make you almost sick. Three perfect works, perfectly played, giving you about one and three-quarter hours' music send you home far more satisfied and happy than three or four hours of long drawn-out apprehension as to what you will be listening to next. Things as encores which were even too awful to put down on the programme. Drivel by tin-pot British composers who ought to be playing football or cricket. Take the N.G.S. records which I have just played over, a beautiful little thing of Mozart's, quite a little gem. That Corelli piece, and then Delius and Warlock. Both merely favourable specimens of modern things, but Warlock's might just as well be called "Summer Night on the River" as the other, and both sound to me like the sort of music any capable musically minded man might improvise for his own enjoyment and which might go on for ever, never actually saying anything.

These two letters, which I select from several others recently received, demand some attempt on my part to provide an answer. I take a good deal of pleasure in printing them, because I think they will help to bring home to many of our readers the difficulties under which our reviewers labour.

First of all with regard to the complaint about cramping the space for reviews every month. It must be remembered that the readers of this paper represent a very elastic standard of musical taste. Some of them have no musical taste at all; many others have much better musical taste than I have myself, better taste than I ever expect to acquire unless I live far beyond the allotted span. Consequently I have from the very first numbers made it my policy as Editor to meet as far as possible the extremely various demands of our public. So far

as expert *musical* criticism is concerned I have no hesitation in saying that our reviewers are as representative a body of critics as could be found in Great Britain. On the other hand, since not one of them really knows anything at all about the gramophone, we have had to gather together another set of critics who do know a great deal about the gramophone, but for whose perfect musical taste neither they nor we are prepared to vouch. In between these two sets of experts is myself, and if I may seem too much of a "Jack of all trades and a master of none," that is after all exactly what 75 per cent. of my readers are. I am always willing to outrage the feelings of both sets of experts, because it is only by outraging the feelings of experts that one can prevent criticism's degenerating into complacency. During the last year the astonishing developments already achieved by new recording have made the business of record criticising twenty times as difficult as it was. I rather wonder if the revolution is yet appreciated in all its implications by the majority of our readers. I doubt it. The attention we have lately been giving to radio is not in the least a sign that we are trying to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, as some of our protestants seem to think. We are all chasing the same old hare we have been chasing for so many years—the hare of musical reproduction. I can perfectly well understand the conservative point of view which says "I prefer the old style of recording and the old style of instrument and the sound-box that my father loved"; but such conservatives are well catered for by our contemporaries. We may perhaps make the mistakes of enthusiastic radicals, but in making these mistakes we show that we have a vitality which no mass of conservative opinion can dare to claim for itself, whether that conservative opinion be a government or a collection of gramophiles. The new wine demands new bottles. It may be that the Panatrope is a clumsy kind of new bottle, but I need hardly remind people that all mechanical progress is a progress from the complicated way of obtaining something new to the simple way of obtaining something better. I am perfectly sure that 80 per cent. of the people who own Panatropes haven't the least idea how to use them. I am equally convinced that 80 per cent. of the people who buy the latest records have not a notion how to extract the best results from them, even under present conditions. I might feel shaken in my conviction that the next two or three years will show as great an advance in the instruments of reproduction as the last year has shown in the quality of the recorded music, if my opinion did not coincide with the opinion of Mr. Vitz. Mr. Vitz has proved to me that the claims he makes for his old-style sound-boxes are justified. Only last week he sent me a specially designed orchestral sound-box which is as great an improvement on any



other sound-box for reproducing orchestras as the one he recently sent me for strings was an advance on any other, and I am equally sure that, when he sends me the sound-box for reproducing the piano, which he promises, this will be an equally unmistakable improvement. It ought to be clear even to the author of a fatuous article last month in one of our contemporaries that when a man like Mr. Virtz claims to produce a sound-box better suited to the reproduction of an orchestral work than of a string quartet he does not claim to get anything out which is not on the record. What he justly claims is that he gives to each record the equivalent of the best possible milieu. Unless a man is a fool he doesn't choose the Albert Hall in which to hear a string quartet any more than he would choose the Wigmore Hall in which to hear a full Wagnerian orchestra. It would be perfectly true to say that the sounds emitted by the quartet in the Albert Hall and in the Wigmore Hall are the same sounds; so they are at the instant they are made, but within a fraction of a second they have become entirely different sounds. But Mr. Virtz looks beyond anything that he has hitherto achieved with his remarkable sound-boxes, and, whatever may be his temporary discouragements, I know him to be man of sufficient faith to persevere with the problem of perfect reproduction. To those gramophiles of little faith I offer the following riddle: How is it that the reproduction on radio of one of the new gramophone records is always better than the reproduction of any orchestra actually playing in concert hall or studio?

I am quite convinced that between radio reproduction and gramophonic reproduction there will soon be no appreciable difference. Will that mean the death of the gramophone? Not at all. What it will mean is that the level of performances on the gramophone will be higher than ever, whether by jazz bands or symphony orchestras or vocal solos. Already the level of performance that the gramophone demands is far higher than that which the radio demands, and what makes one turn back with relief from one's loud speaker to one's gramophone is the mediocrity of performance that the radio inevitably entails. Why should we listen to a second-rate contralto singing *Kathleen Mavourneen* when we can hear McCormack singing it? Why should we put up with the second-rate performance of any opera when we can get a first-rate performance of it on the gramophone? On the other hand, if radio reproduction steadily improves and gramophonic reproduction remains where it is at present we shall be tempted to sacrifice the imperfect reproduction of a great singer for the perfect reproduction of a second-rate singer. Life craves for life, and humanity in the mass will always prefer what is alive and second-rate to what is dead and first-class. In literature enduring vitality is the only thing that ultimately matters. It is perfectly possible for a

contemporary novel with no more life in it than a stuffed owl to deceive a contemporary critic. It is equally possible, though in a lesser degree, for such a work to deceive the public, but only for a time. The stuffed owls of the past, however clever the taxidermist, do not deceive us now.

To discuss some of the particular points of the two letters that preface this article. First of all, the question of the Lener Quartet versus the Virtuoso Quartet. The Lener Quartet has without question done more to popularise chamber music in England than any other similar organisation I know of. I am perfectly willing to admit that from an academic point of view they are inclined to hit below the belt, or, if you prefer to put it this way, that they have deliberately sentimentalised a great deal of their music. This was particularly obvious on their first records issued by Columbia, and to take a specific instance I may mention the nocturne from Borodine's *Quartet in D*, which to my mind was immensely inferior to the same nocturne played by the Flonzaley Quartet and issued by H.M.V. It was, apart from the question of *tempi*, perhaps easier in old days to detect the softness of interpretation which sometimes was not far from degenerating into sickliness. Added to that was the additional suavity effected by the Columbia new process. The absence of scratch did undoubtedly entail a loss of tone; but the vicious scratch of the old Flonzaley records did make the superb fire of their performances intolerable to the sensitive ear. It must be remembered that a devotion to chamber music almost always implies not merely a cultivated musical taste, but also an exceptional fineness of ear. The Columbia new process did more to induce genuinely musical people to tolerate the gramophone than anything else. I venture to suggest that not even electric recording has made so many new recruits from musical circles. Now musical people never did expect a great deal from the gramophone; their attitude for many years was one of contemptuous hostility. There were of course many exceptions, and those exceptions nearly all used fibre needles or soft-tone needles. Even so lately as last month Sir Walford Davies was advising a soft needle to reproduce the *Ninth Symphony*; but let us leave musical people out of it. The original records of the Lener Quartet may have offended academic taste; the Columbia new process may have turned the violins into flutes, the viola into a clarinet, and the 'cello into a horn; but what they also did was to lead a number of people who had never supposed so before to suppose that the combination of four stringed instruments was an extremely pleasant noise. To such people the records of a superlatively fine quartet like the Flonzaley had always seemed an extremely unpleasant noise. Their notion of a pleasant combination had been the flute, harp, and celeste, and though the



Lener Quartet were not quite like flute, harp, and celeste, they were much more like them than the Flonzaley records. Consequently people familiar with Lener records went out of curiosity to hear the quartet itself, and they found that they enjoyed chamber music. All the illegitimate (if they are illegitimate) tricks of the Lener combination helped these novices to realise the startling fact that the chamber music of Mozart, far from being a confused medley of buzzing strings, was actually a series of some of the most delicious melodies that the world has ever listened to. The Lener Quartet, in fact, set out to charm, and if purists were inclined to call it musical ogling the public didn't care; they felt that the purists were like old maids who were jealous of a pretty girl's smile and inclined to impute a deplorable intention. On top of that the Lener Quartet took a great deal of trouble with the social side of their activities; they were as careful as a pretty actress to keep themselves in the public eye. There were plenty of people to ascribe their success to the fact that they were foreigners, and I dare say that the old gibe against us as a nation that we always prefer foreign artists is a true one. I think we do, but the reason for that is not, I believe, a kind of snobbishness any more than our preference for foreign watering-places is snobbishness. I don't deny that fashion plays its part, but the real reason why we prefer foreigners is that foreigners are very often able to express in the interpretative arts what we should like to express, but what we are kept from expressing by our national self-consciousness. The average Englishman may be afraid to let himself go, but he is just as anxious to let himself go as anybody else; and he gets more emotional satisfaction out of a foreign singer or a foreign violinist, because a foreigner lets himself go for his benefit, and if he finds that his emotions are being more played upon than he bargained for he can always put the blame on the performer. If any Englishman sang like Caruso he would embarrass his audience; they would feel shocked at an Englishman's behaving like that in public. A great deal of the hypocrisy attributed to English people is due to this insular self-consciousness. If little Tommy, of Streatham, recites in the family drawing-room with anything approaching fire the neighbours may admire it, but his own brothers and sisters are almost sick with shame. The English troops amazed the French troops by always singing the most mournful songs. The French troops liked to march along to something gay like *Auprès de ma blonde*; the English troops preferred to moan lugubriously the *Long, long trail*; but when the troops were not singing the English never stopped laughing in the most unpleasant situations, and the French felt it was their duty to be as gloomy and solemn as sextons. The point I wish to make is that English people expect their emotions to be stirred by music. The music of

Mozart is altogether too airy and external a thing for the average English audience unless the performers can add to it that lachrymose quality on which English tenors have thrived so long. "I like a damned good andante," a man once said to me, and I think that the sale-books of the recording companies will show that he voiced the taste of the majority. But the Lener Quartet did something else beside their ability to recognise this craving for damned good andantes. They had tone; and this is where I will venture to maintain that most of the native string quartets fail. I believe that the reason why the London String Quartet is so much more relatively successful abroad than at home is just this lack of tone, or, to avoid raising an argument, I will call it mere volume. Their performances became associated in the minds of the gramophone public, first on Columbia and then on Vocalion records, with an alarming scratch which almost drowned their playing. The Flonzaley had an equally alarming scratch, but you were never under any illusion that they were playing a quintet for scratch and strings. The performance by the L.S.Q. of Smetana's *E minor Quartet* recorded by Vocalion seems to me as a performance all that I don't want and don't expect Smetana's music to sound like. I desire from it some gypsy quality, some expression of the pent-up emotion of that great unknown world of Central Europe; but I can easily imagine that the delicacy and restraint of the London String Quartet's interpretation might come as a relief to people who have more opportunities than we have to hear that wild music.

The remarks of my correspondent "Y." about jazz and balalaika orchestras is the expression of an academic English view about music; but to mention jazz and balalaika orchestras in the same breath argues either a deliberate priggishness or a surprising ignorance. There is really no kind of link between the two. I should defend jazz as I should defend golf, which is a stimulus to the gymnastic rather than to the intellectual or emotional side of human nature. The attempt of the opponents of jazz to make the present zest for dancing an expression of human hysteria comparable to the tarantism of the Middle Ages betrays ignorance of the social conditions then prevailing. I have no time here to argue this particular point because it would involve me in an examination of various other hysterical outbreaks of the Middle Ages, which have neither in their causes or effects a parallel at the present moment; but it would be just as much to the point to compare the present craze for golf with the hysterical outbreaks of flagellation in the Middle Ages. The real opposition to jazz comes from the Puritan, and the Puritan, whatever admirable qualities he may possess, does possess one entirely unadmirable quality, which is always to assume that what might be a carnal temptation to himself must



therefore be a carnal temptation to everybody else. The real teetotal fanatics are either those who have been drunkards or might be drunkards. Do let us look at jazz more calmly. It has nothing to do with music beyond the fact that music makes a noise and that jazz makes a noise. It can never be anything like a substitute for music or a rival to music. So far as it does affect music at all, it can only put people in a more receptive condition for real music; even its most violent opponents are bound to admit that it cultivates rhythm. It may be a crude kind of rhythm, and the expression of it may be a crude expression, but believe me it is a great deal more spontaneous and therefore a great deal more beautiful than the completely unspontaneous attempt to teach people classical dancing. I feel perfectly convinced that could we see some genuine Greek dancing of the fifth century B.C. it would bear no kind of resemblance at all to the monstrous posturings and wriggings of what nowadays we have the impudence to call classical dancing. Jazz fulfils a need of contemporary humanity. That being so I can see no useful purpose in abusing it, though I am perfectly willing to abuse the people who have reduced humanity to the state of being dependent on jazz. As for the balalaika orchestras, they are almost entirely devoted to the gypsy songs and folk tunes of Central Europe. The wild melodies they play are of immense antiquity and often of a poignancy that only the earliest expressions of human sorrow can achieve. Probably the ears of my correspondent "Y." are unpleasantly affected by the twanging of those queer stringed instruments which accompany the singer, but those of my readers who are not afraid of a beauty which may sometimes be barbaric, but which is unmistakably beauty, will do well not to dismiss the balalaika records as the same kind of thing as fox-trots or whispering baritones. It is music as unsophisticated as the other is sophisticated; it is music that comes from those immense trackless plains and spaces far away from the sea, and it is music from which the greatest composers have derived some of their noblest inspiration. So, once more, I commend to the very particular attention of my readers the balalaika records issued by the Polydor Company, and I commend them with the feeling that if they enjoy them as much as I do, it will mean that they are extending the boundaries of their imagination and thus approaching "old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago."

To return to the Lener Quartet and what my correspondent "X." thinks of our Mr. P. L.'s criticisms of them. Personally I have no hesitation in declaring for the Lener Quartet records against the Virtuoso Quartet, and I can assure "X." that I have played both entirely with fibre needles and a large horn. It seems to me that when the Virtuoso Quartet gets beyond early Beethoven they go to

pieces. But let us leave the question of the interpretation entirely on one side and confine ourselves to the recording. Now, either the first violin of the Virtuoso Quartet persistently uses too much rosin to get her tone or else the string recording of H.M.V. brings out unduly some harshness on the higher strings. On the other hand there is no doubt whatever that the recording of the 'cello in quartets is better done by H.M.V. than by Columbia. The authentic 'cello of the string quartet is certainly heard from Mr. Cedric Sharpe in the movement called *La Malincolia* from Beethoven's *Sixth Quartet*, and it is rarely if ever heard in the Lener records. In fact that Lener 'cello has always been a problem for the recorders. In almost the first record of theirs that ever appeared of the third movement from Mozart's *Quartet in G* the recording of that 'cello made a bad flaw in the matrix, and now with electric recording I have always the uncomfortable feeling that the 'cello may do the same at a critical moment. In my opinion the Spencer Dyke Quartet recording Schubert's *A minor* for the N.G.S. got nearer to the verisimilitude of a string quartet than has yet been achieved. On the other hand when recording by the same process the last Beethoven quartet most of that verisimilitude was lost. My correspondent "Y." asks rather foolishly why if we can get the perfect 'cello in the Delius sonata we cannot get it in a string quartet. Surely this is the whole problem of the gramophone. He might as well have asked years ago why if we could get good tenor recordings we couldn't get good choral recordings. But let us leave interpretation and technique on one side and ask which makes the pleasanter noise, the Lener Quartet or the Virtuoso Quartet. I feel perfectly sure that the pleasanter noise is made by the Lener Quartet, and since our impression of actual quartet playing in a concert hall is of a pleasant noise my ear, in searching for verisimilitude, requires that it should be doubly deceived by the gramophone, first by the illusion that the instruments are being played and secondly by the illusion that they are being played well. Now, the occasional harshness of the Virtuoso records (played with fibre be it remembered) destroys for me the illusion of reality, because real violins are not so harsh as this. If I am eating beef I prefer to put too little rather than too much mustard on my mouthful. The Parlophone people have not yet given us with electric recording a string quartet, but the Polydor people have, and from them we get an entirely different aspect of the string quartet. The best I have heard so far is undoubtedly the performance by the Amar Quartet of the great *A minor* Beethoven quartet. They bring out the singing qualities of the instruments better than any of the other recorders, but yet in spite of this there is a kind of thinness, such as the voice takes on in frosty air, which detracts from verisimilitude. What, in fact, it all comes down to



is this, that every single recording of a quartet gets part of the effect, but not all of it, and your preference for one or the other will depend on what you miss least, which means to say that a critic's judgment will not depend entirely on his ear, but on his temperamental outlook as well, and also a little on his dramatic sense. The Lener Quartet give me a more visual impression than any of the others succeed in giving me, and that means that for me the dramatic sense will always outbalance the merely acoustic sense. I don't know of anything in chamber music on the gramophone that has given me a sharper illusion of the players actually playing than the Lener performance of the Fourth Beethoven quartet. In saying this I am not so much trying to set up my opinion against that of "X." as to suggest to him that, though first and foremost his ear is the receiver, there may be certain qualities in the mind of our Mr. P. L. which leads him to listen from a different angle.

What is true of the criticism of chamber music applies with more force still to orchestral recording. I am afraid our readers cannot hope for some time to come that our reviewers will show any kind of consistency or unanimity in their criticism of orchestras. Now, F Sharp and myself were perfectly clear that the Columbia recording of the *Fourth Symphony* of Beethoven achieved a greater realism than any other symphony as yet recorded, yet when we read the judgment of our reviewers we find that

this symphony gets less praise than any. Yet the *Second Symphony*, conducted by Beecham, which we put next to the *Fourth* (you will understand I am speaking about the illusion of the actual orchestra) was praised by our reviewers as we too would have praised it. Indeed, except for the opinion passed upon the *Fourth Symphony*, we have found ourselves in general agreement with our reviewers during the last two months. If I say now that the most wonderful orchestral records issued up to date are those of the *Casse Noisette Suite* by the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, recorded in America and issued by H.M.V., it is probable that my dramatic sense has temporarily taken charge of everything else, because the empty concert-hall echo is dramatically speaking an advantage, and the cunningly theatrical orchestration of the suite is continually appealing to one's dramatic sense. So, when I write that these records provide the most perfect illusion of a real orchestra up to date, musical purists will no doubt reserve to themselves the right to say with my correspondent "Y." that I am not really musical. Equally I reserve to myself the right to say that in searching for musical realism from the gramophone we must search for something rather different than would the critics of an actual performance, something that for want of a better word I shall have to call atmosphere, though I am not sure that I should not be justified in calling it life.

COMPTON MACKENZIE.



# THE GRAMOPHONE AND THE SINGER

(Continued)

By HERMAN KLEIN

## The Singing of Lieder—V.

MY task is nearly done. By far the heaviest part of it was completed when I finished with the records of the three great classical song-writers, Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms. Any further choice does not rest with me; it must be guided entirely by the nature and extent of the available material. To take up isolated examples by this or that composer, even illustrious masters like Mozart, Beethoven, or Mendelssohn, forms no part of the purpose of these articles. There are certainly in existence excellent records of *Das Veilchen*, of *Adelaide*, of *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges*; but these *Lieder* are, after all, only beautiful specimens belonging to the school or schools already dealt with, and their very isolation shows that if we would find what attracts the recorder of *Lieder* and his public in Germany

to-day we have to look elsewhere. In other words, I must perforce come at once to the product of the leading moderns, Richard Strauss and Hugo Wolf. If there is space left when I have done with them, I promise that I will utilize it to the best advantage.

RICHARD STRAUSS.

This composer is now in his 63rd year. He wrote his best songs when he was in his thirties, and latterly he has written scarcely any. In this, as in every other branch of composition, he is remarkable for the inequality of his work; now rising to heights so exalted that they almost merit the term "sublime"; now descending to a level of banality and emptiness incredible in a musician of such genius and resource. With Strauss, somehow,



I always feel that I am lucky if I have not grown weary or mentally exhausted long before he has said all that he had to say, especially when he is relying upon the orchestra alone—as in the *Sinfonia Domestica* or the *Alpine Symphony*—for the exposition of his vast crowd of nebulous ideas. But when he is brief he is almost invariably interesting; while he is simply a master of the art-song form, with the added merit of knowing perfectly how to write for the voice. His piano accompaniments, for the most part terribly difficult and intensely descriptive, are the work of one who is himself a consummate executant, without mercy for those who are not.

Some twenty songs represents the total recorded by the Polydor Company. Of these I have about half, and when the number alone is quoted it belongs to their catalogue. First in alphabetical order stands *Cécilie*, the second of the fine group, Op. 27, which includes gems like *Morgen*, *Ruhe, meine Seele*, and *Heimliche Aufforderung* (see below). A striking contrast is afforded by two records of *Cécilie*, each first-rate in its way, viz., by Elena Gerhardt (Vocalion B.3115) replete with movement, passion, and impulse; and by Lauritz Melchior (66440), who supplies the Wagnerian declamation and phraseology which it demands and so makes a rather big thing of it. The latter is aided by an orchestra, but the former, with pianoforte only, comes nearer to Strauss's intention. Again in the *Freundliche Vision* there occurs similar opportunity for contrast. The man in this case is Josef Schwarz (70598), a baritone with a poetic tone and a quality that seems to lie between a *mezzo-voce* and a *falseto*, which he sustains with just the right effect for this dreamy song. The lady is Tatiana Makushina (Velvet Face 1106), a very intelligent singer with a sympathetic voice and artistic style, whose dreaminess, however, is a shade too measured and metronomic. I admit a preference for Josef Schwarz also in his *Heimliche Aufforderung* (\*70598), as compared with Heinrich Schlusnus (70796), whose voice is here very nasal and his enunciation indistinct. This restless song requires more resolution, clearer definition, a more manly tone; which are precisely the qualities that Schwarz imbues it with in a particularly fine record. The accompaniment stands out well.

*Ich liebe dich*, words by Detlev von Liliencron, Op. 37, No. 2, is another fiery song, having nothing but its title in common with Grieg's familiar little *chef d'œuvre*. For my own part I think it rather dull, in spite of its vivacity of movement and the almost violent outbursts of the singer, a tenor named Karl Oestvig (70665). A better song by many degrees is *Ich trage meine Minne*, words by Karl Henckell, Op. 32, No. 1; and of this you can make a choice between two records—H. Jadlowker (70512) and Leo Slezák (62427). Both are

admirable tenors and as regards the singing there is little to choose between the two; but Jadlowker's is the vastly superior record alike for clearness and purity of tone, and I have no hesitation whatever in recommending it. *Morgen* deserves its popularity, for it is a lovely song. The poem, by John Henry Mackay, is a tender outpouring expressive of hope and peaceful anticipation; not the kind of sob-stuff that some singers put into it, as for example, Ernestine Färber-Strasser (62372), a mezzo-soprano, who always seems to be literally in tears. Like Jadlowker (\*70512) and John McCormack (H.M.V. 644), she makes use of an effective violin *obbligato*—suggested by a counter-melody in the piano accompaniment—which in the case of the Irish tenor is played by no less an artist than Kreisler. On the other hand, this adventitious bit of "make-up" is dispensed with by Elena Gerhardt (Vocalion B.3112), who depends solely upon the support of Harold Craxton in a very sweet and touching display of artistry. Jadlowker's is also a splendid record, with clean, manly tone admirably sustained.

*Ruhe, meine Seele*, which belongs to the same set (Op. 27), is a thoroughly Wagnerian setting, à la Erda in *Siegfried*, of lines by Karl Henckell and fascinates one the more because of the obvious source of its inspiration. Hence, too, the fact that it fits that ideal Erda, Maria Olczewska (70651) like a glove—the veil of mystery, the significant phrases, the restrained half-voice unfolding the hidden secrets of her soul—a sort of spiritualistic medium with a glorious contralto voice, badly in need of eternal repose after an unusually trying *séance*. Doubly welcome as a contrast is the delightful *Ständchen*, the best known of all Strauss's songs and, as many opine, the most original and most spontaneous of the whole collection. There is no need to describe anything so familiar. It is an early effort (Op. 17), but has always sounded to me like a fully-fledged little masterpiece. (Van Schack's spirited lines have been well adapted by Paul England.) Apart from the Polydor records of Claire Dux, Jadlowker, and Leo Slezák, which I have not heard, there are others by Frieda Hempel (85296)—light, airy, joyous—by Elena Gerhardt (Vocalion A.0216)—darker, but full of happiness and charm—and by E. van Endert (19110), which, as an elegant and ecstatic outburst of impatient love, I consider the "pick of the bunch," and one of the most perfect examples of modern recording that has yet come my way.

A fantastic song called *Schlechtes Wetter* ("Bad Weather") was unknown to me until I heard the record by Heinrich Schlusnus (\*70706). It sounds most interesting, with its touches of cynical humour, its sinister vocal effects, and its background of clever descriptive accompaniment, and distinctly adds to the value of the disc. *Traum durch die*



*Dämmerung*, the well-known setting of Otto Bierbaum's words (Op. 29, No. 1), ranks among the most poetic and original of this composer's songs. A record of it by Friedrich Schorr (62379) is quite excellent—full of colour and expression, finely-modulated tone, and no sense of monotony such as one often hears in it. Another by Leila Megane (\*H.M.V. E.396) is sung in English, rather indistinctly, it is true, but with pure, fairly steady tone and artistic feeling. I conclude my Strauss review with two tenor examples of that ingenious *lied*, *Zueignung*. Neither is in the first class, but on the whole I prefer Karl Oestvig's (\*70665), despite his open tone, because it is simple, straightforward, and free from tremolo; which is more than can be said for Otto Wolf's (62515), the effect whereof is further spoilt by the orchestral embellishments.

#### HUGO WOLF.

The understanding of Hugo Wolf is indispensable to a complete appreciation of the latest developments in the domain of the German *lied*; and it is among the chief merits of the gramophone that it can enable the student to attain that understanding with comparative facility. The greatest songwriter—as many hold—since Schubert, near whose grave at Vienna his body lies, Hugo Wolf (born 1860, died 1903) was too much of a genius, too brilliant an exponent of his art, to make the smallest allowance for lack of technique either in the singer or the accompanist. To do him all-round justice is harder, in my estimation, than in the case of either Wagner or Strauss. But the reward is proportionately as great to the performer as is the view of the Alps to the climber who has toiled his weary way to the top of Mont Blanc; and it is the privilege of the gramophonist, through this interpreter, to enjoy the sublime scene as easily and readily as though he had been conveyed to the summit in an elevator or an aeroplane—in fact, far more easily and inexpensively than either. At the present moment the songs of Hugo Wolf are very little known to general concert audiences in this country. They are not much sung by our native vocalists, and as a rule rather badly when they are. I trust it may prove to be the function of the gramophone so to widen the knowledge of these songs, that the demand for them will grow and spread as it is doing for the vocal masterpieces of Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms. The need for brevity must be my excuse for the utter inadequacy of the following criticisms. Most, if not all, of these records deserve close analysis and are distinctly worth having.

First comes a favourite, *Auf dem grünen Balcon* (\*H.M.V., D.A.715), exquisitely sung by Elena Gerhardt, the artist who has helped more than anyone else to make it known here. As Ernest Newman (Wolf's biographer and champion) has

justly said, this song "is instinct with delicate and fragrant poetry; for sheer loveliness there are few things of his to compare with it." Its subtle inflections are skilfully conveyed by the accomplished singer. A fine baritone monologue is *Biterolf* or *The Crusader's Song*, as it is sometimes called, sung by the home-sick warrior in the Camp of Akkon, 1190. Different as they are in style, there are good points about both the English and the German records—the first by John Thorne (\*Aco, G.1598-0), and the second by Friedrich Schorr (\*62379); but the latter has more variety of tone and poetic colour. *Er ist's* (or *Song to Spring*) overflows with life and energy. Grete Stückgold (20083), a soprano whom we are to hear this month at Covent Garden, throws plenty of vivacity into it, and the effect, I am bound to say, is enhanced by a sparkling orchestral accompaniment, which sounds more clean-cut than the piano original used by H. Schlusnus (\*70705). In either case the song is a joy. The baritone just named is also commendable in *Der Freund* (\*70658), and again in *Fussreise* (\*70705), where he seems inspired by the wonderful Schubertian swing and rhythm of the "tramp, tramp, tramp." Otto Wolf (62449), on the contrary, loses the rhythm of the tramp and sounds thin and unconvincing in his ditty.

*Weyla's Song* may be popular in Germany, but, to my thinking, it does not compare with some other settings of the Mörike poems; besides, the harp arpeggios are not intended to be played by violins. Otto Wolf (\*62449) sustains the melody well; but Grete Stückgold (\*20083) is unluckily made to "blast" and sound scratchy. *Heimweh* is one of the most attractive of the Mörike-*lieder* and there are four records of it, viz., by E. van Endert (13982), Julia Culp (70531), F. Windgassen (62498) and O. Wolf (\*62515). The awkward modulations are smoothly managed by Julia Culp, whose nostalgia is tenderly expressed, whereas van Endert's is a trifle too sentimental. Both ladies, however, sing better than the men. Heinrich Schlusnus is again to the fore in two superb songs, *Der Musikant* (\*70658) and *Der Rattenfänger* (70660); the one full of lightness and humour, the other characteristic, rich in graphic touches suggestive of Berlioz, and cleverly orchestrated. I cannot imagine these better interpreted, and no less may be said of Heinrich Rehkemper's (66004) magnificent rendering of the great setting of Goethe's *Prometheus*. The tremendous dramatic power of this music, which recalls so vividly the tirades of Wotan in the *Nibelungen*, is realised in noble declamatory passages that rise again and again to epic grandeur. The record is in two parts and admirably free from flaw. The whole thing makes one want to hear Rehkemper himself. He must be a great Wotan.

A quiet, contemplative song is *Ueber Nacht*,



made fairly interesting by F. Windgassen (\*62498), who has a broad, manly style. But much better known, of course, is *Verborgenheit* (*Secrecy*), one of the Mörike-*lieder* and among the most individual. It suggests a world of hidden grief and sorrow, and the voice of Elena Gerhardt (H.M.V., D.A.715) is perhaps a shade on the bright side for it. Nevertheless, she sings it beautifully. *Au contraire*, the contralto tone of Klara Czery (\*62527) expresses the grief and misses the sustained beauty of the phrases and the climax. She slurs to excess and pronounces badly. Of another well-known lovely song, *Verschwiegene Liebe*, excellent records are forthcoming from Leo Slezák (62425) and H. Schlusnus (\*70660). Both are imbued with intense poetic feeling and rare distinction of style. It is indeed hard to choose between them, but, if compelled to give a verdict, I should pronounce in favour of Schlusnus, on account of his exquisite *mezza voce* effects and the irresistible charm of his phrasing. On the whole, it is the best record I have yet heard by this singer, whose efforts invariably reveal profound sentiment. What a blessing it would be if he could lend a little of his dark timbre to John McCormack! The rendering by our Irish tenor of *Wo find ich Trost?* (H.M.V., D.B.766) might then possess real significance in addition to a sweet voice and a fluent method. At the same time it is not one of Wolf's great songs, and perhaps there is little more to be done with it.

I had originally intended to include Franz and Lassen in the purview of these articles, they being representative composers of a certain type of popular art-song which enjoys more or less permanent favour in German musical circles. But after all, I find that they yield little for the edification of gramophonists, and as they are sung even less in this country—much less, certainly, than they were towards the close of the last century—there is nothing to be gained by pursuing my comments further in that direction. As for *Lieder* of the ultra-modern type, I am not sure that any of them are recorded; and if they are I prefer to leave them to speak for themselves. Meanwhile, I propose to conclude with a few examples by two composers whose vocal works have very properly been thought good enough for reproduction, namely, Franz Liszt and Carl Loewe.

#### LISZT.

This extraordinarily versatile musician, the most conspicuous link between the classical and the modern schools of composition, did not write a large number of songs; but some of them were of notable originality and interest, and a good many survive. As one authority has well said, "One may doubt whether Liszt possessed real creative gifts, yet his high culture, his extensive knowledge of literature, and his warm enthusiasm for ideals which make for progress (refusal to be tied by rules,

aim after characterisation) have, at any rate, given to his works the stamp of originality." We may perceive these qualities more readily perhaps, in his big works for the orchestra and the piano than his oratorio, *The Legend of St. Elizabeth*, which I heard performed in his presence at St. James's Hall on his last famous visit to London, in 1886. That was distinctly a trying experience. On the other hand, I shall never forget the almost supernatural charm of his playing, to which it was my good fortune to listen on three different occasions—once at Mr. Henry Littleton's house at Sydenham, once at the Royal Academy of Music, and once at the old Grosvenor (now the New) Gallery at the soirée given in his honour by his pupil and champion, Walter Bache.

His best-known song is, I fancy, the dramatic setting of the mediæval *Volklied*, called *Die Loreley*, which is generally supposed to have been written for a soprano voice. However, as chance will have it, the only record that has come to hand is an H.M.V. (D.1098) made by Tudor Davies, and I am sorry to add that it is not a very good one. The important accompaniment sounds both mechanical and slovenly, while the words give the impression of being a Welsh, not an English, translation. The voice comes out well enough, but wholly without variety of colour or interpretative power. In short, the piece does not really suit the singer. Another of Liszt's favourite *lieder* is *Es muss ein Wunderbares sein*, a love-song with a strain of ravishing melody to which a singer like Leo Slezák (62428), when at his best, knows how to impart the full measure of fascination. He uses the *mezza voce* almost throughout and the smoothness of the tone is astonishing. Less inspired as a composition is *O komm im Traum*, though the voice and art of Josef Schwarz (72537) would almost persuade us to the contrary. You can see by this how much the singer has to do with it, for the same song as rendered by Otto Wolf (62516) would probably bore you to tears. However, this again may be the fault of the voice—a rough, "open" tenor—as much as of the method. I do not like Mr. Wolf's spasmodic, unrefined style any better in the graceful *lied* from the same pen which he has recorded on the reverse side of the same disc.

To be quite candid, Liszt requires first-rate artistry from his vocal no less than his instrumental interpreters. I have always been aware of this, and acquaintance with these few records of his songs has not tended to modify my opinion. Only one more instance: the well-known *Liebestraum* (whether originally composed for the voice or the piano matters not) can be made, by the art of a Paderewski or a Godowsky, to sound just as delicately poetic as an ordinary pianist can make it sound vulgar. But neither the co-operation of a string quartet, nor a solo pianist to throw in the



firework cadenzas where they occur in the piano arrangement, suffice to raise the effort of Mario Chamlee (Bruns. 30113B.) to the requisite artistic level. It all sounds poor stuff, really; very long and extremely tedious—everything bar the text, which escapes criticism for the best of reasons: it never “gets over.” An Italian version of the same piece, sung by Tito Schipa (H.M.V., D.B. 873) is more acceptable vocally, and should please those who are familiar with the melody, and prefer a tenor voice to a pianoforte. So much for Liszt.

#### LOEWE.

The celebrated art ballads of Carl Loewe were written during the first half of the 19th century. It was well on in the second before they began to trickle through into this country, and even now they remain undeservedly neglected by singers, who protest a fanatical admiration for the Tudoresque and the folksong. As descriptive stories in song they are unique. They have a distinct musical value of their own, a character that cannot be mistaken, and even composers like Wagner and Schumann have been influenced by them. The complete collection was published in Germany (in London by Weekes & Co.) in 1891, edited by Albert E. Bach, of Edinburgh, who prefaced the eight volumes with an instructive introduction in both languages. Loewe, who was born in 1796 and died in 1869, was a friend of Goethe, a splendid musician and a widely-cultured man. *Edward* (effectively recorded by Norman Allin, Col. L.1466) and *Archibald Douglas* are the best known of his ballads, but there are others equally fine, if not finer. “The Ballads of all nations inspired him, and scarcely any composer has succeeded like Loewe in representing in tone mysterious, ghostly, eerie, and gloomy subjects.” The high esteem in which they are held abroad is shown by the seriousness, the concentration of thought and feeling, with which they are approached by the most distinguished male singers. I remember how they were interpreted years ago by Gura, by Henschel, by David Bispham; and I am glad to have the present opportunity of praising a few Polydor records as a completion of the task I set myself in the New Year, namely, to interest the readers of THE GRAMOPHONE in the Singing of *Lieder*.

And the Loewe singers, who are they? Nothing less than the very pick of to-day’s German operatic basket. Most industrious of them all is Theodor Scheidl, a past-master in the art, a truly Protean delineator of every shade of human emotion set forth in these old historical and legendary narratives. He simply fascinates and holds you like some ancient mariner, whether he be hurling at you verse after verse of *Archibald Douglas* (65509—two parts); or executing the weirdest runs and ornaments in *Der Nöck* (66142—two parts); or trolling a Hungarian-like *volkslied* in *Prinz Eugen, der*

*edle Ritter* (66001). Then Emil Schipper positively makes your blood run cold with *Herr Oluf* (70703—two parts) so characteristically “tuppence-coloured” is it, so repellent in tone and manner, so full of fear and menace and tragedy. I would that I had space to describe it in detail. Atmosphere, indeed! These records positively teem with it. Again another consummate artist, Paul Bender, in *Der Mummelsee* (65575), displays an unsuspected phase of his genius in the quaintest florid ornamentation à la Handel, extremely difficult to execute, but all clearly, crisply, elegantly done. Next Leo Slezák, most versatile of modern tenors, in the wonderful setting of *Tom the Rhymer* (*Tom der Reimer*, 62431—two parts), replete with sharp contrasts of full and half-voice, affording a masterly study of vocal colouring in every imaginable dramatic shade. And, finally, two delightful bass records on one disc (66371) by L. Schützendorf, one of the aforesaid *Tom*, and the other of the naïve, melodious ballad known as *Die Uhr*, which in English ought to be entitled *Once round the Clock*.

Dear old warm-hearted Loewe. How pleasant it would be to find his interesting Art-ballads getting popular in our midst! But, as you will have perceived, they are not merely for beginners; and they really take some singing. HERMAN KLEIN.



## THE END OF THE VOLUME

THIS number ends the Fourth Volume. The question of binding will be dealt with next month.

In previous years we have printed a fairly detailed Index and have sold it from the London Office only at 2s. This year, since no Gramophone Year Book has yet appeared even on the horizon, we have decided to print a much fuller Index to Vol. IV, and to issue it through the usual channels with the June number at 1s. This can only be done if every one of our readers will give an order for it at once to his dealer, his newsagent or the London Office.

The value of the Index will lie in the fact that it is the only means of tracing at a glance all the music of any importance which has been recorded during the last twelve months, and all the performers. In this way it is a sort of Year Book. In addition there are innumerable references to distinguished records and performers of past years; sections devoted to groups of records, to gramophones, sound-boxes, needles and subjects of technical, historical or general interest, and of course references to all articles, contributors and correspondents.

The work entailed is enormous, and all that you are asked to do is to order the Index at once and help the good work. It is remarkable value for 1s., apart from other considerations.



# THE GRAMOPHONE IN SCHOOL

A NEW FEATURE *conducted by* W. R. ANDERSON

NEW books on school music are now appearing frequently. The days of neglect of this subject are gone, and the quality of the discussions of it is high. Mr. A. H. Peppin, formerly music master at Mill Hill, Clifton and Rugby, has added a sound and stimulating volume to the new library of "Oxford Musical Essays" in his "Public Schools and their Music" (Oxford Press, 5s. 6d.).

Looking at music in the only wise way in which it can be regarded in education—as one of the "humanities"—the author gives the results of thirty years' close and affectionate study of music and of youth. It is unnecessary to say more in commending this book than that it is written with a combination of enthusiasm and understanding of difficulties that is even yet not too common among those who discourse on the teaching of music. Teachers in other than public schools cannot fail to read it with profit, for it goes to the root of matters, and discusses both the peculiar conditions of the author's work and, what is more important, the principles that ought to guide us when we set out to use music as a means of mental development and as a grace in life. To make the best of both worlds is our task, and this counsel of a man of long experience carries the weight of authority and the power of conviction. I commend it strongly to all who are interested in the subject with which these articles deal.

In pursuance of my plan of asking representative practitioners in various branches of school music to set forth their ideas here, I have pleasure this month in giving an article by Dr. Robert T. White, who is Lecturer in Music at Goldsmiths' College, University of London, and whose books and magazine articles are known to a wide circle of educationists.

Dr. White writes as follows:—

In the interesting article by Mr. A. H. Radcliffe which appeared in the March number of THE GRAMOPHONE, the writer gave an outline of the scheme which he has successfully put into operation in his own school, where the pupils are drawn from a district which is not exactly a Paradise. Although in this article I shall have to cover almost the same ground as Mr. Radcliffe, I shall approach it from a different angle, *viz.*, that of the ordinary class-teacher. As one in charge of the musical work of the largest Training College for Teachers, I am brought into contact with a large number of students who are by no means well equipped musically. Yet most of them will be required

to make use of the gramophone when they take up class-teaching, and my business is to try to prevent their using it in an ineffective way. On account of the congested nature of our general syllabus, there is little opportunity for carrying out any complete series of gramophone demonstrations, but the students are made acquainted with the possibilities and dangers of the instrument. In this article I am merely reproducing the advice which I give to those who in no sense are cultured musicians.

It seems to me that one of the main functions of a music teacher is to provide facilities for pupils to enlarge the range of their musical experiences. It must be recognised that the musical horizon of most children is very limited in extent, and that this will vary much in particular cases. To many children, their first acquaintance with an orchestral work, even if this be of a type which to us is almost conventional, will be quite a new and bewildering experience. On the other hand, songs of the street, jazz tunes and solos from the latest revue which children, in towns especially, assimilate with so much facility, may be quite unknown to the musical public. Before the advent of the gramophone, there seemed little hope of any rapid improvement in the creation of a more or less cultivated musical public, particularly as regards instrumental music. One recognises the valiant efforts of the pioneers in appreciation, but even they could not make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Appreciation implies an adequate performance of the music, not merely talking about it; and there is a danger lest the lures of Appreciation should tempt teachers to undertake the work without any instrumental equipment at all. In these days the use of the gramophone has partially solved the problem, but the teacher's personality must be taken into serious account. Up to a point it is true that a teacher is born, not made, and we can hardly be surprised to find that the combination of the qualities of a good performer with that of a good teacher is not too often met with. It can hardly be gainsaid that the best music is generally too difficult for an amateur to play well; it would not be the best if all its beauties were on the surface and could be apprehended without any effort.

Until quite recently the musical education of most children of school age had been confined to the singing of songs, an art which has been brought to a high state of perfection, as any one knows who has had any experience of Competition



Festivals. There are reasons for this apparent narrowness of outlook. First of all, quite a large number of Elementary Schools are yet without a pianoforte; and nobody has so far been rash enough to propose pianoforte-playing as a suitable subject for inclusion in the curriculum of such schools. Moreover, even if pianos were everywhere provided, only a few class-teachers could play the instrument sufficiently well for purposes of demonstration. Another difficulty is that very little encouragement is given in the Secondary Schools to pianoforte teaching; it is said that it would interfere too much with preparation for Matriculation and other examinations. Since most of my students have been educated in Secondary Schools, it is easy to realise that it is futile to expect that many of them will be even passable pianists; hence their concentration upon song-singing, in which department of music it is possible to get good results without many instrumental qualifications.

The advent of the gramophone and pianola has partially solved this problem, but there are pitfalls for the unwary. I am all in favour of the use of the pianola, especially in the form of the "Duo-Art" or some similar type of instrument, but it is difficult to imagine a time when all schools will receive one of these remarkable instruments. It is almost the "real thing"—which the gramophone is not—yet it touches only one branch of musical art, *i.e.*, music for the pianoforte. Variety of tone-colour, which fascinates young folk, is naturally limited on the pianola, while the gramophone is gradually approaching perfection in this respect. The ideal would be to have both a gramophone and a pianola; that being attained, one could reasonably demand a high standard of musical culture.

However, I am here taking into account the gramophone only. First, it is imperative for the young teacher to realise its imperfections, and to see that the children do not imagine that the gramophone gives a really faithful reproduction. Of course, it is well within the bounds of possibility that one fine morning we shall wake up to find our instruments hopelessly out of date, on account of some revolutionary improvement. Meanwhile, we can only insist that the main function of the gramophone in its present form is to kindle a keen desire to hear the particular work in its proper setting, and it says a good deal for the instrument that it does really whet the appetite. The bad reproduction of low notes has annoyed some of us for a long time. Improvements have been made in this matter; meantime, the imperfection can be largely disguised if the teacher has a copy of the piece and "doubles" the bass part on the pianoforte, preferably in octaves.

Again, the teacher who wants to use vocal records is severely handicapped, because it is apparently impossible at present to reproduce

sibilant sounds (*s*, *sh*, etc.); see the *sun smiles* becomes *ee the un iles*. The defect is more noticeable in some records than others. But it would be well if it were possible for the great issuing firms to provide a copy of the words of *all* vocal records. Anyhow, all teachers have qualms about using records which seem to suggest that slovenly articulation does not matter. Judging, however, from the avidity with which the general public buys records of Italian arias, it would seem that unintelligible words are of no consequence.

Schools of the type with which I am dealing find that to get together a library of records is a costly matter. In a few places a kind of exchange has been inaugurated, and in many districts the parents are ready to help. But a large collection is not wanted: a dozen carefully chosen will do well for a start. (Nearly all records are now double-sided, so that six records would most often provide a dozen pieces.) Suppose we attempt to select a few with the idea of extending the pupil's musical experiences. The records named below comprise only such pieces as will be found analysed in the First and Second "Books of the Gramophone Record" by Percy Scholes (Oxford University Press):—

1. Three Madrigals: (a) *All creatures now*; (b) *In going to my naked bed*; (c) *Fair Phyllis I saw*. These are all on one disc (H.M.V., E.267). The music is published by Stainer and Bell, price 1s. They are representative of unaccompanied choral music of Elizabethan times.
2. Vocal Solo, *Ombra mai fu* (Handel's "Largo"), sung by Caruso. H.M.V., D.B.133.
3. "Hornpipe" String Quartet (Haydn). Col. D.1443, 1444.
4. Violin and Piano. The *Kreutzer* Sonata (Beethoven). H.M.V., D.1066-9 or Col. L.1884-1888.
5. The *Unfinished* Symphony (Schubert). H.M.V., C.1294-96.
6. Song, *The Erl King* (Schubert). H.M.V., D.257 sung by Radford.
7. Orchestral Suite, *Peer Gynt* (Grieg). H.M.V., C.1298, 1299.
8. *Mother Goose Suite* (Ravel). H.M.V., D.708, 709.
9. *Water Music* (Handel). Col., L.1437-8.
10. *Casse Noisette* Suite (Tchaikovsky). Parlophone, E.10516-9. H.M.V., D.1214-6.

Hundreds of similar lists could be compiled, but the records named above would keep a class going for more than a year.

In preparing an Appreciation Lesson the first problem which presents itself to the teacher concerns the state of the child's mind when he is



listening to a record. What exactly is the impression made, or is there any impression at all? In the majority of cases all that probably can be affirmed is that the music goes in at one ear and out at the other, without leaving any apparent trace. The pupil's mind is quiescent; he brings no contribution to the understanding of the music. At first he may take a languid interest in it; every now and then he gets some faint inkling of a tune, but would hardly recognise it when it recurred. Should there be the slightest increase of complexity the pupil is evidently bewildered, and his mind wanders. The details which give so much pleasure to the cultured musician are simply unnoticed by the novice. Now if we present a record without saying anything about it, the pupil may have some pleasant musical experiences—and this is so much to the good—but do these exert any educative effect? When the next record is played, exactly the same thing will happen. This is where the teacher has to step in. By orderly and frequent presentations of the salient themes of the work, he must make the children familiar with them. The great hindrance to the full enjoyment of music is *unfamiliarity*. The "mark of familiarity" of which psychologists speak is an absolutely necessary ingredient in all pleasurable mental states.

A teacher who has to give a lesson in geography will prepare much more matter than he can possibly expect to introduce into the lesson: similarly, a teacher who is contemplating giving a musical appreciation lesson must know the work much more intimately than the pupils. With the help of Mr. Scholes's analyses, which should be supplemented by a pianoforte score of the work, he must hear this privately many times before he takes it to the classroom. He need not be able to play the piece on the pianoforte; although, personally, I prefer to teach the *themes* from this instrument, as it is very easy to lose one's place in the gramophone record. It would be quite absurd to teach the class all that is contained in the analysis, but the teacher himself should know the piece inside out.

Perhaps a summary of the procedure which I recommend in dealing with Elementary School children may be of interest. I am assuming that the piece to be examined is an instrumental work. (Much vocal music hardly requires analysis, although the words should be read once or twice before being sung.)

1. If the work is even remotely connected with any story, this should be narrated in order to kindle interest.

2. The teacher plays the first main tune on the piano ("one finger"); the children sing it (transposition may be necessary).

3. This tune is found on the record, and exhibited in its proper setting.

4. The same procedure is applied to any other

important tunes. (So far we have demanded no more from the teacher than he gives in any singing lesson.)

Suppose at this point we were to play the whole work, the children would certainly begin to feel more "at home" with it than before. But the chief tunes are never actually presented so that one immediately follows the other: "bridge-passages" separate the tunes, and it is here where the teacher will have to be alert. Sometimes the bridge-passage is of very little importance, so that there is no need to listen intently, but such passages often partake of the nature of "development," *i.e.*, the presentation of a theme in many guises and disguises. These development-sections demand considerable attention on the listener's part, and the exercise of will-power to prevent interest from flagging. The development-sections are usually constructed from fragments of one or other of the main tunes; the listeners should try to detect these fragments, and much fun is often experienced in suddenly recognising an old tune in new dress. At any rate, these passages will have to be isolated and played several times. In my own practice I find it useful to write the main themes on the blackboard and then to stand by, using a pointer to indicate the appearance of any important theme or fragment. Sometimes one can find a sharp child who will do this. The lesson will, of course, end with a performance of the work as a whole, without comment.

What is the best way of making sure that the children have really become fairly familiar with the work? Obviously by getting them to talk about it, but here disappointment is likely to be in store. It is probable that the pupils have a good many things they would like to say, but they cannot find the right words to use. To put it in another way, their musical vocabulary is too straitened. Consequently, before beginning any course of Appreciation Lessons the teacher should give one or two lessons on the meaning of such musical terms as "phrase," "scale," "mode," "chord," "modulation," "rallentando," "development," "bridge," "movement," "suite," "variations," and so forth. Even so, the younger pupils will remain more or less tongue-tied until the teacher has prompted them. The latter must be prepared to accept any answer provided that it is not absolutely irrelevant. Such questions as these are available. "I am going to let you hear a few bars so that you can tell me the pulse-measure of the piece." (Incidentally, it may be remarked that children can keep more interested in the music if they are allowed to beat time unobtrusively.) "Raise your hands when the music is loud, and lower them when it is soft." "Which part of the piece would you like to hear again?" "Do you know any other piece at all like the one we have



been studying?" In all such questioning, it is to be borne in mind that the answer is not important; all that we want to ensure is that the pupil is doing some thinking. In order to get some information as to the emotional effect of the piece the pupils should be asked for a suitable title. But, if no precautions are taken, some quite irrelevant answers will be proffered. To avoid this, it is a good plan to write on the blackboard six or more titles and ask the children to choose one of these.

Now I do not pretend that the above procedure is the best, but it may serve for teachers whose musical abilities are somewhat slender. Some eminent teachers would quarrel with this statement, and would assert that lessons of this type should never be given by teachers whose musical equipment is not pretty complete. My answer to that criticism is that we must recognise facts. We cannot prevent anybody from giving Appreciation Lessons; therefore, we should not discourage class-teachers, but should rather encourage them to persevere, avoiding any method palpably unsound. The main ground of criticism, *i.e.*, a bad performance, does not hold when the gramophone is used.

I have said nothing about Musical History or Orchestration, as the teacher for whom the above remarks are designed will probably have little opportunity of dealing with these subjects. As regards the first, a short course could be provided for the upper forms, which should not be devoted

exclusively to biographies: the lives of most great musicians were rather hum-drum. Orchestration is a fascinating study, but if any teacher desires to deal with the subject he *must* study it from a full score, otherwise he will make it mostly a matter of guess-work.

How much time should be devoted to musical work of this type? Well, the thorough examination of a lengthy orchestral piece is a big business and should be undertaken with a full sense of responsibility: in fact, it should be regarded as a "star" lesson and given only occasionally. In planning out Appreciation Lessons, it should be remembered that some pieces are extremely simple as regards analysis; such are many of the early instrumental works. Do not try forcibly to dissect a piece which is homogeneous in structure. Also do not ask young people "Which piece do you like best?" They will most likely give you a different answer every time. Of course, we must be very careful in the choice of music for the very youngest pupils. The main point to observe is that the pieces must be very short. Elgar's *Wand of Youth* suite (H.M.V., D.48 and D.468) is particularly charming.

R. T. WHITE.

NOTE.—By arrangement, and for the better dissemination of these articles amongst school authorities, they are appearing also in the first issue of each month of *Education*, the official organ of the Association of Education Committees.



## COMPETITIONS

Two competitions, BOTH CLOSING ON JUNE 1ST, were announced in the March number, page 405.

A coupon, which must accompany each entry, was given in March and April (page xxix), and will be found in this number (p. xxviii).

*Competition A.*—Cash prizes of Five Pounds (first) and Three Pounds (second), and Six Consolation Prizes (copies of "Music and the Gramophone") are offered for the winning LIST OF TWENTY BEST TUNES.

A note on the object of this competition appeared in March, begging *all* our readers to enter for it and to treat it with real care and absolute independence of taste. In answer to some correspondents, who ask what is meant by "a tune," we would suggest that every competitor should read the list of "the greatest melodies in the world" given in Mr. John E. Kite's letter on page 391 of the February number, and should then get to work compiling her or his list on those lines.

*Competition B.*—For Overseas Readers only.—Three Pounds' Worth of Records (winner's choice) and Four Consolation Prizes (copies of "Music and the Gramophone") are offered for the best description in not more than 300 words of GOOD OVERSEAS RECORD SERVICE.

The object of this competition is to discover how our Overseas Readers choose their records and how they get them; whether the records are supplied by a local agent or ordered straight from England, and from what firm; and whether the service is prompt and whether the records arrive in good condition.

We shall ask the winning firm in this competition to make a present of a record to everyone of its clients who sends an entry.

All entries should be addressed to the Editor, THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, London W.1, and should be marked "Competitions" in the left-hand top corner of the envelope.

The Editor's decision will be final.



# UNRECORDED CHAMBER MUSIC

## II.

By WILLIAM MEADMORE

MENDELSSOHN wrote two string Quintets, one in A (Op. 18) composed in 1831 when he was but 22, and the second in B flat (Op. 87) which was written fourteen years later. As might be expected they are utterly dissimilar in style, the earlier work having that glittering charm which is associated with the incidental music to "A Midsummer Night's Dream," whilst the mature work has a virility and nobility which the other quite lacks. It is such a work as the B flat Quintet which entitles Mendelssohn to serious consideration as a significant composer. It has been urged against the Quintet and from a technical point of view that the treatment is too orchestral. This hardly, however, detracts from one's enjoyment of the music. The Quintet takes thirty minutes to perform and its four movements are very finely contrasted. The *Adagio* is a lovely piece of writing and its impressive termination is Beethovenish. The dainty *Andante Scherzando* is typical of the popular estimation of the composer in its mood of delicate fancifulness, whilst the *Allegretto molto vivace* (the concluding movement) has passages distinctly reminiscent of "The Hymn of Praise."

It is difficult to understand why the name and music of Richard Walthew remains comparatively unknown to the great majority of music lovers. Very rarely is his music heard in concert rooms, and sometimes occasionally via the wireless. One must travel to South Place (where his chamber music is so popular as to result in frequent performances) to hear it, and to realise that he is one of the most delightful and attractive of contemporary composers. Although modelled on the classical tradition, yet there is a fund of originality and a fertility of invention which never fails, and withal the music is essentially English. By this I do not mean that the composer has recourse to folk song to express his nationality, for Walthew is never at a loss to invent a good tune. I would strongly urge the recording claims of the Phantasy Quintet in E minor and major for Piano, Violin, Viola, 'Cello and Double Bass. Dedicated to W. W. Cobbett, it is a short work lasting but thirteen minutes. I am sure that this splendid Quintet would make an immediate appeal to all gramophonists and is certainly worth far more attention than the foreign rubbish which one recording company perpetrates in the name of chamber music. It may also interest readers of THE GRAMOPHONE to know that Richard Walthew has written a most illuminating book on "The

Development of Chamber Music," and which is published at a very reasonable price.

One other quintet should certainly be mentioned, and this also brings us to a contemporary Hungarian composer—Ernst von Dohnanyi—whose name has only once appeared upon records; and that where a violin sonata has been transcribed for the 'cello. Born in 1877 he began to compose when he was seven years old. When he presented himself at the Royal High School of Music at Budapest in 1893 he produced to the Principal three string quartets, a string sextet, a Mass, a large number of piano pieces and a piano quintet! This last work was first performed in Vienna in the same year. I am not sure whether this is the same quintet which was the first work published of the composer's and designated Opus 1. If so, it is a remarkable tribute to the composer's youthful abilities. The work can be performed in twenty-eight minutes and is marked by none of the eccentricities of the "advanced" (!) contemporary composers. Its form is of the classical school and it is not surprising to know that Brahms thought very highly of the young composer. Dohnanyi's nationality is abundantly displayed in the syncopations and other rhythmic devices which are used throughout the quintet. It is most refreshing in these days to find a composer still exploiting the traditional forms and modes and yet having plenty to say in a melodious and unhackneyed manner. One is irresistibly reminded of Richard Strauss's remark to Hindemith after he had heard a performance of the latter's quartet: "Why do you write atonally when you have such talent?" Certainly the Dohnanyi Quintet is a supreme joy from the first to the last bars. The slow movement—the crucial test—is possibly the finest of the movements. A bare analysis of the notes would convey little, one can only say that the composer is here most distinctive and original, the master of his medium. On a first hearing the listener will get many flutters and thrills of pleasure as one lovely theme succeeds another. The neglect by the gramophone companies of this composer is unaccountable. They do not stand alone, however, for Cecil Gray in his "A Survey of Contemporary Music" does not even mention him among the minor composers! I have heard much of Dohnanyi's music and never a piece that did not straightway arouse my enthusiasm. Many of his orchestral pieces are in the permanent repertoire of the Queen's Hall



Orchestra—very few other contemporary composers can claim this, I am sure—and his chamber music is constantly being played and is loved by both performers and listeners. Failing the Quintet, Op. 1, the Quintet in E flat, Op. 26, would suggest itself as a “try out” for the recording companies, for lasting but twenty-two minutes, it could easily be fitted on to three records. Other chamber works are the Quartet in D flat, Op. 15 (twenty-seven minutes), the Quartet in A, Op. 7 (thirty minutes), and the particularly lovely Serenade trio, Op. 10 (twenty-one minutes). All these works badly need recording, all are so extremely good that actually one hesitates to differentiate. In fact, no other works by contemporary composers have so appealed to me as having the quality of permanence as have the Dohnanyi compositions with the exception of the Ravel (I am glad to see that the N.G.S. propose to record this work completely), Delius and the Sibelius quartets.

There has been an amazing neglect of Sibelius in this country. Whilst the *Valse Triste* and *Finlandia* have been dinned into our ears until we almost vomit at the mere names (the constant “hackneyism” has spoilt the music for us), his other music has been practically ignored. Like Dohnanyi his harmonic and melodic idiom is straightforward and conventional, he has something to say and is not driven to the strange shifts that so many of our present-day composers take refuge in, obviously hiding their poverty of thought in a baffling obscurity. The Sibelius string quartet at once grips one. The idiom is pleasant and attractive and the music flows with ease and naturalness. It is divided into five movements and takes thirty minutes to perform.

Of Piano Quartets, the most serious recording omission is that of the Brahms in C minor, Op. 60. It is the third and last of his compositions for Piano, Violin, Viola and 'Cello and was written in 1875. It takes thirty-one minutes to perform and contains two of the most attractive melodies which Brahms ever wrote. There is a curious and obvious structural resemblance to the Finale of the Mendelssohn C minor Trio, but, of course, there is no question of plagiarism. The music arouses attention from the very beginning which opens with the keynote in octaves upon the piano, and is then followed by a ghostly and mysterious theme given out by the strings. An analysis of the music would be tedious, but no one could fail to be charmed by the cradle song melody of the *Andante* which terminates rockingly in a passage of indescribable beauty. The working out of the *Finale* is noteworthy for the ingenious interweaving of phrases which have already appeared. The quartet has many unusual features. The gramophone repertoire of Brahms' music cannot be considered representative until this fine work has been recorded.

Chausson was perhaps the most gifted of the

talented circle of young composers who gathered round and were influenced by César Franck. His music is comparatively unknown in England, although Sir Henry J. Wood has on a few occasions performed the particularly lovely symphony, which was also given by the B.B.C. at a concert at Covent Garden under the bâton of Henri Defosse. Two of his chamber music works are well worth serious attention, the Concerto in D major, Op. 21 for Piano solo, Violin solo and string quartet and the Piano Quartet in A. Both are very long, the Concerto taking thirty-nine minutes and the quartet thirty-seven. A start might well be made with the second work, which ranks amongst his finest compositions and is, in fact, one of the most significant contributions to the repertory of piano quartets. It was first performed in London by the Henkel Quartet on Nov. 23rd, 1910. The writing for the viola is unusually interesting; most appropriate is the giving of the principal melody of the slow movement to this instrument. Whilst the work is divided into the conventional four movements there is much inter-play of the same themes throughout the work. The third movement is headed “Simple et sans hâte” and although built upon the slenderest of material has almost a Brahmsian wistfulness.

Joseph Jongen, the Belgian composer, has also written a splendid Piano Quartet (E flat, Op. 23), a lengthy work, however, which occupies forty-seven minutes in performance. Jongen's chamber music is characteristic of his rare and delicate sensibility. From his earliest student days he was greatly attracted towards this medium, and when he was twenty the Royal Academy of Belgium awarded him 1000 francs for his first essay in chamber music—a string quartet. Later, they gave him another special prize—this time for a piano trio. Like Lekeu and Vriels he was much influenced by the ideas and ideals of Franck. The Quartet for Piano and Strings was first performed at the Société Nationale in Paris in 1903. Dedicated to Vincent D'Indy it was written in 1901-02. Despite its length the work never loses interest, the thematic invention being noteworthy and most charming. This is particularly apparent in the Scherzo. Like much of the music influenced by Franck there are constant references from movement to movement to what has gone before.

Reverting to the classical composers, Schumann's solitary Piano Quartet in E flat, Op. 47, well merits attention. Of Schumann's chamber music only the Piano Quintet has so far been completely recorded, although there have been snippets from the Op. 41 string quartets. A strong recommendation for the Piano Quartet is that it only takes twenty-five minutes and thus could be fitted on to three discs. It is a fine and striking composition, a curiosity being that the Scherzo has two Trios.

(To be continued). W. MEADMORE.



# LITTLE KNOWN MODERN WORKS

## I.—Schreker's *Birthday of the Infanta* Suite for Orchestra

By N. P.

FRANZ SCHREKER (b. Monaco, 1878). "Der Geburtstag der Infantin" (revised 1923). Kapelle der Staatsoper-Berlin. Polydor 69768-69769-69770.

SCHREKER'S dance pantomime, *The Birthday of the Infanta*, is founded on Oscar Wilde's charming story of the same name in "A House of Pomegranates" (Methuen & Co.), of which the plot, or as much of it as is used in the suite, may be summarised as follows.

It is the Infanta of Spain's twelfth birthday, and for this notable occasion all kinds of wonderful ceremonies and entertainments have been devised, such as a mock bullfight, a puppet show, dances sacred and secular. One of the dances is performed by a dwarf of revolting aspect, whose queer antics fascinate the Infanta. The cream of the jest is that the little creature is entirely unconscious of his grotesque appearance. He falls in love, as you will have guessed, with the Infanta of Spain.

One day the dwarf beholds himself, for the first time, in a mirror. So the Princess had only been mocking him! So he, himself, was this hideous misshapen form. The Infanta, entering the room and seeing the dwarf lying on the floor, orders him to get up and dance. "He will never dance again," the Chamberlain tells her, "for his heart is broken." "In future," cries the Infanta, "let those who come to play with me have no hearts." And she runs out into the garden.

The story is told in Wilde's most jewelled style, which admirably suits the theme. Schreker's music is undeniably effective, if unoriginal, and is very well orchestrated. His style is that of a modern Saint-Saëns, eclectic to a degree; and echoes of many men's voices, Stravinsky's in particular, are here to be found. None the less, in an unpretentious way, it is a pleasing, tuneful work.

FIRST PART.—*Reigen, Aufzug und Kampfspiel* (Dancers, procession and bullfight).

"A procession of noble boys fantastically dressed come out to meet her." There is nothing special in the music accompanying these incidents that calls for comment except the Straussian use of the celesta. The recording is quite good, but apt to fail in clarity in passages for full orchestra.

SECOND PART.—*Die Marionetten* (The Puppets).

"Some Italian puppets appeared in the semi-classical tragedy of Sophonisba... they acted so well... that at the close of the play the eyes of the Infanta were quite dim with tears." Pleasantly devised orchestral colour. A melancholy Chopin-esque tune on the cor anglais with a string background and, later, some contrapuntal interest. Well recorded, string tone especially so.

THIRD PART.—*Menuett der Tanzerknaben* (Dancing-boys' Minuet).

"The solemn Minuet performed by the dancing-boys of the Church of Nuestra Senora del Pilar... in front of the high altar of the Virgin... known as 'Our Lady's Dance.'" The music gives quite a good idea of the "intricate figures, slow gestures and stately bows" of the dancers. The recording is rather strident in forte passages and not so successful as the above, but passable with a half-tone needle.

FOURTH PART.—*Die Tänze des Zwerges*—"Mit dem Wind im Frühling" (The Dwarf's Dances—"With the Wind in Springtime").

"The funniest part of the whole morning's entertainment was undoubtedly the dancing of the little dwarf." It is during his first dance before her that the Infanta throws him the white rose from her hair.

If one can forget Petrouchka's dances (evidently Schreker couldn't), these ones are certainly effective. The use of cymbal and horn at the opening of this dance is a nice touch. Here again an unpleasant shrillness obtrudes in the louder portions. Use a half-tone needle.

FIFTH PART.—"In blauen Sandalen über das Korn, Im roten Gewand im Herbst" ("The light dance in blue sandals over the corn, The mad dance in red raiment with the autumn").

The Dwarf's other two dances in which he expresses, all unaware of his hideous appearance, his love for Nature. The second dance, on the brass with a florid part for flute and a pounding drum, is the best and is well recorded.

SIXTH PART.—*Die Rose der Infantin*—*Nachklang* (The Infanta's Rose—Echo).

"Was it Echo? Could she mock the eye, as she mocked the voice? Could it be that—? He



started, and taking from his breast the beautiful white rose, he turned round and kissed it. The monster had a rose of its own... it kissed it with like kisses... When the truth had dawned upon him he gave a wild cry of despair and fell sobbing to the ground."

The music is appropriately discordant, but a tender phrase evidently typifies the white rose while, near the end, an echo of the sad puppet theme appears, an ironic touch of Schreker's devising. There is a genuine pathos in the music which is well recorded.



## SELECTED RECORDS

By F SHARP

[The object of this list and, it is hoped, subsequent lists, is merely to remind old readers and to inform new readers of records from the general catalogues which have been praised in the past and should not be forgotten by the discerning.]

**H.M.V.—D.89.—Isolde Menges and William Primrose** (violin duet): **Golden Sonata** (Purcell), piano acc. by H. W. Templeman, 12in., 6s. 6d.

"Miss Menges... in the company of Mr. William Primrose in a lovely record of Purcell's *Golden Sonata* for two violins. I am tempted to call the *Golden Sonata* one of the chief glories of English music. I wish that Shakespeare could have heard it. It was worthy of his ears. I cannot say more. You will find in it five melodies of such exquisite gaiety and tenderness as you will not find on any other single disc, though you should search the world to find them."—*The Editor*, November, 1924.

**VOCALION.—B.3112.—Elena Gerhardt** (soprano): **Der Musensohn** (Schubert) and **Morgen!** (R. Strauss), in German, 10in., 4s.

"Gerhardt's records are now pearls of cheap price, but, as ever, priceless... This record contains Strauss' sentimental but charming little song, *Morgen*. The first entry of the voice is preceded by a long exposition of the song's tune; this is beautifully played by Mr. Harold Craxton—a model for accompanists to study. The reverse is a jolly Schubert song, sung with immense rhythmic vitality and glorious diction by Mme. Gerhardt. Singers, by the way, should note especially the interpretation of the final phrases of *Morgen*; in other hands they might seem empty and dull, here they are pregnant with meaning."—*N. P.*, November, 1924.

"There is no comparison with the earlier records. These" (speaking of A.9220 and B.3115 also) "really are Gerhardt, and the recording of the piano is the best I've heard."—*The Editor*, February, 1925.

**PARLOPHONE.—E.85051.—Marek Weber and his famous Orchestra:** **Blue Danube Waltz** and **Roses of the South Waltz** (J. Strauss), 12in., 4s. 6d.

"The Marek Weber waltzes are all desirable records—lovely waltzes perfectly played."—*F Sharp*, August, 1924.

**H.M.V.—D.910.—Göta Ljungberg** (soprano) and **Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Albert Coates: **The Head of Jokanaan** from **Salome** (R. Strauss), 12in., 6s. 6d.

"Strauss has never, to my mind, written such lovely music as the opening of this long lament, so beautifully sung here by Mme. Ljungberg."—*N. P.*, October, 1924.

"Perhaps as a feat of recording these records" (including *The Dance of Seven Veils* and *Opening Scene*, D.908 and 9) "have touched high-water mark. I began by hating the music, but I was so fascinated by the miraculous reproduction of colour that I played them over and over again, and I ended by thoroughly enjoying them. Ljungberg, the soprano, is great."—*The Editor*, November, 1924.

**H.M.V.—D.B.735.—Madame Kirkby Lunn** (contralto): **The Land o' the Leal** (traditional) and **Turn ye to me** (arr. Malcolm Lawson), 12in., 7s. 6d.

"Kirkby Lunn sings most beautifully... *The Land o' the Leal* and *Turn ye to me*."—*The Editor*, November, 1924.

**PARLOPHONE.—E.10238.—Emanuel Feuermann** ('cello): **Adagio in D** (Bach) and **Ave Maria** (Gounod-Bach), 12in., 4s. 6d.

With reference to the *Adagio*, K. K. says, in February, 1925: "This latter is one of the best 'cello records I have heard—noble music, honestly set forth."

**VOCALION.—X.9463-4.—Lionel Tertis** (viola) and **Ethel Hobday** (piano): **Sonata in F minor, Op. 120, No. 1** (Brahms), first and second movements, 10in., 3s. each.

"... It is hard to imagine the slow movement could be more beautiful than it is here. Its lovely tunes glow with sombre richness as they pass out of the instrument so wonderfully played by Lionel Tertis. The recording of this and of the pianist's part is worthy of all praise. The latter is Ethel Hobday, a fine artist."—*N. P.*, November, 1924.

**VOCALION.—X.9502.—John Buckley** (bass): (a) **Old Clothes and Fine Clothes**, (b) **Full Fathom Five** (Martin Shaw) and **The Rebel** (W. Wallace). Piano, Stanley Chapple. 10in., 3s.

"Every single word of the three songs John Buckley has chosen can be clearly heard. Singers please take note. His material is good also... Mr. Buckley's record sets a high standard both for himself and for others."—*N. P.*, February, 1925.

"I can particularly recommend the Vocalion record of John Buckley singing Wallace's *Rebel* on the one side, and two jolly songs of Martin Shaw's on the other. Good clear easy singing this."—*The Editor*, February, 1925.

**VOCALION.—K.05082.—H.M. Life Guards: Suite for Military Band in F** (Holst). Two parts. 12in., 4s. 6d.

This record was among the first twelve in the June Competition for best middle-priced records, and was third in the twelve best military band records competition of December, 1924.

**COLUMBIA.—320.—Harry Tate and Co.: Motoring**, 12in., 4s. 6d.

**COLUMBIA.—870.—Harry Tate and Co.: Selling a Car**, 12in., 4s. 6d.

"For me the classic comic records on the gramophone are those of Harry Tate, published by the Columbia Co.—particularly *Motoring* and *Selling a Car*. Of course, I have often seen Harry Tate in *Motoring*, and nearly laughed myself out of my stall every time, but I don't think that my appreciation of it as a record is helped by that. I really cannot imagine the existence of a person who would not think them funny every time he put them on."—*The Editor*, December, 1924.



# Analytical Notes and First Reviews

## CHAMBER MUSIC

Instruments used: H.M.V. new model, large table grand, No. 126, sound-box No. 4, and Columbia large table grand, sound-box No. 7.

### HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

D.A.847, 848, 849, 850 (four 10in. records in album, 24s.).  
**Flonzaley String Quartet: Quartet in F, Op. 135** (Beethoven).

D.A.851, 852, 853, 854 (four 10in. records in album, 24s.).  
**Flonzaley Quartet: Quartet in G, Op. 18, No. 2** (Beethoven).

Eulenburg and Philharmonia scores.

K. K. calling (P. L. is on holiday).

I did not hear the Columbia Op. 135, but I have been comparing this H.M.V. interpretation with the N.G.S. Spencer Dyke records. The Flonzaley is a fine body, but not the ideal of most people, I find, in Beethoven. Their temperament is too mercurial. They lack depth, in the last resort. Their idea of a *piano* tone, *sotto voce* (see opening of *Lento assai*) is not mine. The N.G.S. records are superior in feeling here, admirably as the Flonzaley people play. They take the *Vivace* faster than the Dyke, and I slightly prefer the quicker speed; but the jumps in the first fiddle in this part are more neatly negotiated by Mr. Dyke, and the tone is richer. I like the N.G.S. soft tone. We don't get nearly enough soft—*really* broad, rich, extremely soft, tone—from most quartets (choirs are weak here, too). With the new recording the old fear of playing softly—that it would not come off in reproduction—should have departed. It hasn't, quite. I strongly advise everyone who can to hear both the Flonzaley and N.G.S. records before deciding which to have. On price the latter has it, of course (18s. against 24s.). I must, any way, give the Flonzaley high praise. Few quartets can play with greater vim and inner excitement; only in the most deeply felt moments do they fail, I feel, partly because they won't ever quite let a thing alone. They must be doing something with pretty nearly every note. They slightly overdo this refinement in Beethoven. A trifle more breadth of vision is wanted. These are fine points of debate, of course, and I expect some people will like this nervous energy more than the (as I see it) richer solidity of our players.

*Allegretto*, two sides; *Vivace*, one; *Lento assai*, two; *Grave*, etc., the remaining three sides.

Of course, in the early quartet of Op. 18 they are delightful. There is still a tendency to overdo the stresses, as at the start of the second subject in the first movement (bar 36). It is not sufficiently recognised that Beethoven really did not intend a violent jab at *sf*. Pianists sin in this way, and as the string player has so many ways of getting accent, he ought to be particularly careful not to overdo the mere bow-pressure. This little point shows one of the chief weaknesses of the Flonzaleys. It may be native exuberance, but it should be curbed. Otherwise, they play like angels. We shall not quickly have a more vivid Op. 18, No. 2, and for those who like even their early Beethoven hot and strong here is the very ticket.

One movement on each of the four records.

### COLUMBIA.

L.1965, 1966, 1967 (12in., 19s. 6d.). **Lener Quartet: Quartet in D minor** (K.421) (Mozart). Eulenburg and Philharmonia scores.

The crystal purity of the opening, both in composition and performance, is enchanting. Thus is opened a door to lovely and unexpected happenings. All the players' resource is used here with the very finest effect. They keep that opening couple of pages in finely-bound control at just the right tension. The Minuet—another uncommon bit of expression with almost a stern note in it—is again splendidly conceived. These players are happiest when they have most to bite on—in the later Beethovens, for instance, and such Mozarts as this, which is of quite outstanding calibre. Those who like to see a little beneath the surface of Mozart's mind will enjoy the work richly.

The second movement begins in the middle of the second side and finishes on side 3. The Minuet occupies side 4 and the third record has the last movement.

### PARLOPHONE.

10563 (12in., 4s. 6d.). **Edith Lorand Trio: Scherzo and Andante con moto from Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 49** (Mendelssohn). Eulenburg score.

The playing, as ever from this group, is well-pointed. The restful elegance in the slow movement is not quite there—to my taste. The Scherzo is admirable. Of course, after the Mozart, this is small beer, but it flows freely and pellucidly, and those who like such a brew will enjoy the record. K. K.



## ORCHESTRAL

Instruments used: H.M.V. new model, large table grand, No. 126, sound-box No. 4, and Columbia large table grand, sound-box No. 7.

### PARLOPHONE.

E.10554 (12in., 4s. 6d.). **State Opera Orchestra, Berlin, conducted by Siegfried Wagner: Entry of the Gods into Valhalla, from Rhinegold** (Wagner).

E.10555, 10556 (12in., 9s.). **State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Dr. Weissmann: Battle Symphony, Op. 91** (Beethoven).

E.10557 (12in., 4s. 6d.). **State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Dr. Weissmann: Overture to Mignon** (Thomas).

E.10558 (12in., 4s. 6d.). **Edith Lorand Orchestra: Selection from La Bohème** (Puccini).

E.10559 (12in., 4s. 6d.). **Dajos Bela's String Orchestra: Humoresque** (Dvorak) and **Caprice Viennois** (Kreisler).

The Rhinegold extract shows good, strong, steady playing, without any frills or fancies. Siegfried is not a great conductor, we know, but in such material he can't go wrong. The music takes itself out of a man's hands and expands and dignifies itself in the way of all fine music. The recording is of superior quality—almost Parlophone's best, I imagine.

The way of the *Battle Symphony* was this. Maelzel (of metronome fame) had a sort of mechanical military band called the Panharmonicon. He suggested going on tour, along with Beethoven, taking this affair (they proposed coming to England among other places), but the tour never came off. It was for this instrument that the battle piece was written, the occasion that served as excuse being the victory of Wellington at Vittoria on June 22nd, 1813. To raise funds for the tour, Maelzel got Beethoven to arrange the music for the normal orchestra and to give a concert, at which this work, and the seventh symphony, were the chief attractions. They handed over the proceeds to a fund for the soldiers wounded in the battle of Hanau, and hoped to get publicity that would serve them well when they gave other concerts, for their own benefit. In the end Beethoven quarreled with Maelzel, and the partnership was broken.

Battle pieces were all the go a century since. Even for Beethoven the ground was dangerous. He did not make a success of the job. Maelzel is said by Moscheles (who saw the sketches for the piece) to have supplied the framework of ideas, written the "drum marches and trumpet flourishes," given Beethoven hints about the introduction of *Rule Britannia* (triumphant) and *Malbrook* (despondent—though, from its association with "We won't go home till morning," it sounds always a little comic to us); about "how he should depict the horrors of the battle and arrange *God Save the King*, with effects representing the hurrahs of the multitude." In short, Maelzel seems to have had not a finger, but a whole fist, in the pie. However that may be, the dish is not very digestible. It is a cut above *The Battle of Prague* and such



like, but there is little of the mature Beethoven in it. This isn't the Beethoven we want to remember. Let us keep that other, far happier, piece of "programme" music, the *Pastoral* symphony; but I think we can do without the *Battle*. It was dedicated to the Prince of Wales, who failed to recognise the compliment, and so annoyed Beethoven. The odd thing is that the composer apparently thought quite well of the work. He gave careful directions, in a preface, as to how certain machines for reproducing the sound of rifle- and cannon-fire were to be used, and altogether seemed to take quite a pride in the music. I'm not one for crying down Beethoven, but we ought to recognise distinctions always. This work, which is well played and recorded, is, frankly, a museum piece. Down among the dead men let it lie.

The Thomas and Puccini music is of hard-wearing quality. In each case the interpretation is equally sound—not quite up to the highest standard in the tone of individual instruments, but giving a good sound ensemble and a sufficient volume of ample capacity for moderate ears. The Dvorak *Humoresque* is, of course, the one. I don't much care for the rather violent shoots that go through the simple tune. Of the twopence-coloured sort, this is good enough, and the tone (if you care for the band's constitution, which I do not very much) will give satisfaction.

#### POLYDOR.

66453 (12in., 5s. 9d.). **Opera Chorus and Orchestra**, conducted by J. Heidenreich: **Bridal Chorus** from *Lohengrin* (Wagner) and **Easter Hymn** from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni).

66457 (12in., 5s. 9d.). **State Opera Orchestra, Berlin**, conducted by Robert Heger: **Ballet Music** from *Orpheus* (Gluck).

66458 (12in., 5s. 9d.). **State Opera Orchestra**, conducted by R. Heger: **German Dances** (Schubert).

66473 (12in., 5s. 9d.). **State Opera Orchestra**, conducted by Max von Schillings: **Magic Fire Spell**, from *The Valkyrie* (Wagner).

The *Lohengrin* music is sung steadily, with good control of nuance and blend. The wood-wind is a trifle uneven in the introduction to the second part of this piece. The other extract is a nice bit of singing also. Mercifully, the choir doesn't shout the house down at the climax. If we could have this tune as well done on the stage, we should be spared some at least of the trying moments in *Cavalleria*. I should rather like to hear this choir in some unaccompanied work. We remember that other fine combination, the Irmeler Madrigal Choir, and hope for more from those admirable lady choristers also.

Some of the Gluck airs are the essence of sweet, graceful refinement. There is a feminine tenderness, for instance, in the first one here given, that blends with a stronger note in the middle section of the tune and makes a lovely little piece. The recording is true and most pleasant to listen to, bating an odd fiddle top note or two. There is much more homogeneity and value in this ballet music than in most such incidental operatic trimmings.

The *German Dances* are slight enough, but happily turned off. It is interesting to compare these with the dances of one who had a good deal of Schubert's spirit, and some of his tricks—Dvorak. Schubert can play the little gentleman better, but in music of this type Dvorak tugs at our coat-tails with a more ingratiating smile. We feel Schubert is being a little too formal for our perfect pleasure. The recording does ample justice to the debonair music.

The *Fire Music* gets the breadth and regality of the music, at the expense, slightly, of balance of tone. There is very little to grumble at, however, and the power of it all is admirably felt. The mystery lacks something of inwardness, but these German players nearly always grasp the dignity of Wagner. Very rarely do they tear a passion to tatters, as one or two of our native conductors urge a band to do.

#### HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

D.1219 (12in., 6s. 6d.). **London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Albert Coates: **Prelude to Act 3 of The Mastersingers** (Wagner).

C.1319, 1320 (12in., 9s.). **Covent Garden Orchestra**, conducted by Eugene Goossens: **Prelude, Adagietto and Farandole** from *Suite, L'Arlésienne* (Bizet).

B.2437, 2438 (10in., 6s.). **Royal Opera Orchestra**, conducted by Malcolm Sargent: **Overture, William Tell** (Rossini).

We never can tire of the mellow sweetness of the *Mastersingers* prelude. Was there ever a finer summing-up of the autumnal richness of a noble mind? Sachs lives in this music. The pace,

I feel, is a trifle slow. The music just loses its strong pulse in places. It is rather more a matter of stress than of actual pace, mostly. This is a small matter. The main thing is that the record is a worthy presentation of lovely music. I have long included this extract in my little list of heart-easing pieces.

The Bizet music, full of vim and the sense of the theatre, is splendidly done. There is something a little simple-minded about it that, to me, makes it a peculiarly fit companion for Daudet's play (now fifty-five years old; this was before *Carmen* came out). The story is the tragedy of a young Provençal man's love for a girl whom on account of her past he cannot marry. In the end he kills himself. The Prelude is founded on a folk-tune of Provence. The Adagietto is played in a scene wherein two lovers, after fifty years' separation, meet again. The Farandole is an exciting dance (this and the Adagietto are on one disc).

The new *William Tell* is impressive—a little too solemn at the start, I fancy. The storm is A.I., the aftermath again a wee bit heavy, and the finale good, but a bit gritty. It does not quite build up as we hope, but it is quite loud enough. The recording is adequate, though not quite first-rate.

#### BRUNSWICK.

15121 (10in., 5s. 6d.). **Cleveland Orchestra**, conducted by Sokoloff: **Wedding Music and Prelude to Act 3 of Lohengrin** (Wagner).

50090 (12in., 8s.). **Cleveland Orchestra**, conducted by Sokoloff. **1812 Overture** (Tchaikovsky).

These are only fragments, but they are very clear and, so far as they go, satisfactory. Here is good discipline—I feel that. I am not sure that it should be felt, but it may be described as a "guid faut." The wedding march is taken very soberly. The Prelude to Act 3 is brilliant, but shrill. The shrillness is, of course, mitigated by distance. The suburban builder did not allow for the new gramophone when he made his desirable residences. You have to borrow your neighbour's house to hear your own instrument properly.

A little of "1812" goes a long way. This record contains quite sufficient of it to satisfy most people. It is as good a record's worth of the music as one could desire for the money. I believe I like this the best of all the recordings of the piece. The low strings are fine. Those horns are uncommonly efficient, too, and the end is ferocious; I like Mr. Sokoloff's unforced readings. We are a little too much used to the out-Heroding-Herod tactics of one or two popular British conductors, in this queer survival from an earlier age. Perhaps it is as well it should still be heard, as an example of a curious kind of barbarism. In time it will be a "museum piece," I suppose, like Beethoven's *Battle of Vittoria*. The most instructive commentary on its history is furnished by the Proms., in whose programme it was a star turn twenty years ago, along with cornet solos and flute fantasias. It has lost its place there, and may in time be relegated to a back seat among records. Meantime, it is well it should be done like this; we can the better learn to appreciate its values.

#### VOCALION.

K.05296 (12in., 4s. 6d.). **The Festival Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Adrian Boult: **Overture to The Flying Dutchman** (Wagner).

K.05297 (12in., 4s. 6d.). **The Belgravia Salon Orchestra: La Caprice de Nannette and Demande et Réponse** (Coleridge-Taylor).

I like the *Dutchman*, but not quite so much as I have liked one or two other recent recordings. The tone is pretty fat, but the wind rather lacks bloom, so to speak. It is good bread-and-butter tone. I think the recording is very clear and adequate. The impression is of the conductor's riding the storm just a trifle too easily—of the effects being worked up the least bit rigidly. This is only a small feeling, that some may not have at all. The performance is certainly worth recommending. The Belgravia people (with piano) play the sweet nothings of Coleridge-Taylor a little heavily. The fiddle is slightly shrill aloft. I do not care for the pizzicato plonks. There are so many ways of doing this sort of music, and every blessed one of them is right, so it seems to me, as long as something of the mood is caught. The rest depends more on the state of your internal economy than on your mental or spiritual state, which don't come into the business much. This sort of playing seems to me to befit chops and tomato sauce.



## ACTUELLE.

15242 (11 in., 3s. 6d.). **Borgani**, with orchestra: **Air from Concerto in A minor** (Goldmark) and **Larghetto from Violin Concerto** (Beethoven).

15241 (11 in., 3s. 6d.). **Pathé Symphony Orchestra**: **Good Friday Music from Parsifal** (Wagner).

The violin tone is too loud and inflexible. The orchestra is not well-balanced. The music is coarsened. The Beethoven is cut. (I have no score of the Goldmark). I thought the days of cuts were over. So they are, for most of us. A few works may be accepted thus, but not, I feel, this lovely Beethoven movement. As it is not well done here we need not further consider the point now.

The *Good Friday Music* is insensitively played, so that much of the charm is taken from the music. The orchestral balance is poor.

K. K.



## INSTRUMENTAL

Instruments used: H.M.V. new model, large table grand, No. 126, sound-box No. 4; Columbia large table grand, sound-box No. 7.

## ORGAN.

Lovers of the old metrical Psalms will like to have **A. M. Henderson's** dignified playing of **Selma** and the **Old 124th**, two fine tunes well known in Scotland and Ireland (Beltona 6071, 2s. 6d.). Note that a loud steel needle broke down the fabric of my copy near the end. The pedal was too much for it, apparently. **Norbert Ludwig** on Imperial 1730 (2s.) plays two pieces, **The Holy City** and **The Palms**, both described as by Edmund Cromwell. These are, of course, arrangements. The organ, which has no pedal to speak of (as recorded), is used in the best circus fashion. It comes out rather exceptionally clearly.

In a **Meditation of d'Evry**, played by **Herbert Dawson**, some pleasant light stops are heard; on the other side is the well-known **Toccata of Dubois**; that comes out more clearly than I expected. There is not too loud a commotion at the end. These pieces are neatly played (H.M.V., C.1321, 4s. 6d.).

Columbia has three records: **Quentin Maclean** playing the **Poet and Peasant Overture** at Shepherd's Bush Pavilion (4318, 3s.); and **W. Steff-Langston**, at the Elite Super-Cinema at Wimbledon, playing a Coleridge-Taylor **Intermezzo in C**; and a Brahms **Hungarian Dance** (4319), and Fibich's fiddle **Poem** and the **March** from Grieg's **Sigurd Jorsalfar** music (4320). The Suppé sounds a trifle breathless here and there. The Brahms is squeaky, and Coleridge-Taylor uneven and gassy. Fibich's piece shows the organ in a better light, and the March, starting a good bit too fast, rollicks along in a bean-feasty fashion that does not at all recall the spacious days of Norwegian history. The player takes a liberty or two—repeating chords, for instance. I cannot recommend either of the last two records. I think the organ needs taking a little more seriously. They say the child shows forth, in his development, the progress of the race as a whole. Are we to have, in the early story of organ recording, the not very cheerful tale of the beginnings of music on the gramophone all told again at length? Can't we skip to the interesting part right away?

## PIANO.

Vocalion sends **Sapellnikoff's** interpretation of Liszt's twelfth **Hungarian Rhapsody** (A.0269, 5s. 6d.). The piano is more evenly scaled in this recording than in some performances I have listened to. Only the bass is a trifle brittle in places. I fancy the player's touch is partly responsible. He does his work well, though, without "going clean through the tone," as is the ill manner of some, in Liszt.

We are familiar with the thoughtful playing of **Edward Isaacs**, for he is frequently heard by wireless. He puts taste and grace

into his performance of Chopin's **Waltz in A minor** (Op. 34, No. 2), and the Liszt transcription of one of the **Polish Songs**. The piano tone is pretty good, warm in places and a little pale in others (Regal, G.1045, 4s.).

Parlophone sends **Karol Szreter's** performance of Johann Strauss's **Soirée de Vienne**, arranged by Grünfeld (10561, 4s. 6d.). This has excellent fluency and the recording is resonant. I feel the strings as metal bars at times, but Szreter, happily, does not play the blacksmith with them. A good record of showy music, this.

Those who admire the functioning of a remarkable machine will like some of **Moiseivitch's** playing in the Chopin **A flat Impromptu** (H.M.V., D.1217, 6s. 6d.); others, who regret his almost total lack of poetic feeling in the pure sense, will wish a Hess or a Scharrer had played it. (When is Hess going to record? It will be an irreparable loss if she doesn't). The other two pieces, **Flirtations in a Chinese Garden** and **Rush Hour in Hong Kong**, are from a suite by **Chasins** that Moiseivitch has been playing at his recitals lately. They are mildly amusing. The piano records well and the player's hard tone is particularly clearly rendered.

**Mark Hambourg's** playing in four of Mendelssohn's **Songs without Words** (H.M.V., B.2433, 3s.) is poor indeed, in bad taste, and even inaccurate. This is not a creditable record. I wish H.M.V. would withdraw it and next time this player records listen to him with the music before passing the disc.

## VIOLIN.

**Alfredo Rode** gives us old-fashioned parlour fireworks in a **Dance of the Goblins** and **La Clochette** (H.M.V., B.2436, 3s.). Those who still care for this sort of cold fire may care to try this record. Of its outmoded kind it is good enough.

Polydor sends Bruch's **Kol Nidrei**, played by **H. Solloway** (piano, **Waldemar Liachowsky**). I think the graver tone of the 'cello suits this piece best, but this performer treats it well, and gets good variety of colour and volume. He keeps up the tension a trifle too much in certain long phrases, I think. This is not a large defect, and many will not mind it at all. The vibrato is much used, but in a piece which may reasonably be treated with some emotion this is not out of place. Though the interpretation does not quite touch eloquence, it is strong and attractive (66488, 5s. 9d.). **Vasa Prihoda**, playing for the same Company, gives us arrangements of Schubert's **Ave Maria** and Mendelssohn's **On Wings of Song** (66484, 5s. 9d.). The accompanist is **Charles Cérne**. This violinist has good resource, but I feel he makes the simple melodies too full of emotion. It is not quite sob stuff, but rather near it. This record is for those who like it "laid on thick." In both these discs the piano records well.

A good ten-inch record is Vocalion's, of **Jelly d'Aranyi** playing a **Hungarian Poem** of Hubay in a dinky fashion that is very pleasant, and an old **Alman** from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, that **Harold Craxton** has arranged. **Ethel Hobday** accompanies (X.9981, 3s.).

Two of **Paganini's** simple-minded "Sonatas" (11 and 12) are played by **Spiwakowsky** for Parlophone (10562, 4s. 6d.). With the criticism that the fiddle's tone is a little penetrating on certain notes, I commend this as the right sort of playing for the music. There are the usual tricks, all nicely brought off by player and recorders.

## VIOLA.

**Tertis** plays for Columbia two pieces—the charming **Canzona** of his friend William Wolstenholme, who has written several pieces especially for this master of the viola, and Cyril Scott's **Cherry Ripe** (slightly over-ripe, I feel). Scott alters some of the notes of the melody. This seems unnecessary. Another view of the cherries—relics under a glass case, date about 1890; these harmonies are so ancient (D.1569, 4s. 6s.).

## 'CELLO.

It is the fashion to pretend that you are not being ungrateful for their proffered boons when you ask 'cellists to play 'cello music, and to make the request with all seemly diffidence. Isn't it time we were a bit stronger? Here is **Casals**, the undoubted king of all such as handle the big bow, fobbing his disciples off with the **Prize Song** and **O Star of Eve**. (H.M.V., DB.1012, 8s. 6d.). Of course, the playing is grand; but a singer can move us here far better than any instrumentalist. What about a Beethoven 'cello sonata? And there is a little other 'cello music. These big folk ought to show a lead. Risk it, Pablo!

K. K.





## OPERATIC

**MARIA JERITZA** (soprano).—*Agatha's Prayer* from "Der Freischütz" (Weber). Two parts. In German. H.M.V., D.B.982 (12in., 8s. 6d.). (Translated in THE GRAMOPHONE, July, 1926, p. 86.)

**ELISABETH SCHUMANN** (soprano).—*Deh vieni, non tardar* from "Le Nozze di Figaro" (Mozart) and *L'Amerò sarò costante* from "Il Rè Pastore" (Mozart). In Italian. H.M.V., D.B.1011 (12in., 8s. 6d.).

**GERTRUDE JOHNSON** (soprano).—*Waltz Song* from "Roméo et Juliette" (Gounod) and *Jewel Song* from "Faust" (Gounod). In English. Columbia 9193 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**SIGRID ONEGIN** (contralto).—*Amour, viens aider* from "Samson et Dalila" (Saint-Saëns) and *Ah, mon fils* from "Le Prophète" (Meyerbeer). In French. Brunswick 50076 (12in., 8s.).

**M. G. THILL** (tenor).—*Je suis aimé de toi* from "La Traviata" (Verdi) and *Air de Jean* from "Hérodiade" (Massenet). In French. Columbia L.1964 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

**FERNAND ANSSEAU** (tenor).—*Salut, tombeau sombre et silencieux* and *Ah, lève-toi, Soleil!* from "Roméo et Juliette" (Gounod). In French. H.M.V., D.B.951, 12in., 8s. 6d.

**MARIA ZAMBONI** (soprano).—*Signore, ascolta* and *Morte di Liù* from "Turandot" (Puccini). In Italian. Columbia D.1572 D.1571 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

**FRANCESCO MERLI** (tenor).—*Non piangere Liù* and *Nessun dorma* from "Turandot" (Puccini). In Italian. Columbia (10in., 4s. 6d.).

**BIANCA SCACCIATI** (soprano) and **FRANCESCO MERLI** (tenor).—*In questa reggia* from "Turandot" (Puccini). Two parts. In Italian. Columbia D.1570 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

**JOHN O'SULLIVAN** (tenor).—*Di quella pira* and *Ah si, ben mio* from "Il Trovatore" (Verdi). In Italian. Columbia D.1573, (10in., 4s. 6d.).

**MARIANO STABILE** (baritone).—*Monologo dell'Onore* and, with *Natalia de Santis*, *Quando ero paggio* from "Falstaff" (Verdi). In Italian. Columbia L.1970 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

**MARIANO STABILE** (baritone) and *La Scala Chorus*.—*Te Deum* from "La Tosca" (Puccini) and, with *A. VENTURINI* and *G. NESSI*, *Brindisi* from "Otello" (Verdi). In Italian. Columbia L.1969 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

**LA SCALA CHORUS OF MILAN**.—*Chorus of Cigarette Girls* from "Carmen" (Bizet) and *O Signore che dal tetto natio* from "I Lombardi" (Verdi). In Italian. Columbia D.1568 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

*Maria Jeritza*.—It will be understood, of course, that this is the great air in *Der Freischütz* which we know best under the title of *Softly Sighs*, and which in the original German is called *Leise, leise*. I cannot say whether Agathe is in Maria Jeritza's repertoire, or indeed, whether she has ever essayed it at all; but in any case it is not a character that would bring out the strongest side of her talent, and the music does not seem greatly to appeal to her. In spite of there being plenty of room to spare on the disc, she takes the whole piece at record speed (no pun intended!), sings it perfunctorily and without a trace of religious fervour. The tone is frequently hard, but the diction irreproachable throughout.

*Elisabeth Schumann*.—Two admirable bits of Mozart singing by an artist who always shines to advantage in the music of the immortal master. The voice is delightfully steady. But on a 12-inch disc we ought, I think, to get the recitative *Giunse alfin*, which precedes *Deh vieni*. The violin *obbligato* in the *Rè Pastore* air is gracefully played by Marjorie Hayward.

*Gertrude Johnson*.—The waltz-airs from *Roméo et Juliette* and *Faust* are familiar enough, yet how seldom does one hear them

really well sung? Brightness and fluency alone do not suffice; they demand brilliancy and technical finish as well, and here, I fear, is where the present efforts fall short. The chromatic flourish that begins the *Roméo* ought never to be sung *staccato*; while the *acciaccaturas*, or little grace notes, in the principal waltz theme are not all alike, as the singer seems to suppose. Most of them rise instead of falling to the main note, and Gounod was very particular about this being accurately done. The cadenza is smoothly executed, but, on the whole, the performance of the *Jewel Song* is the neater of the two.

*Sigrid Onegin*.—Just the right sort of alluring voice, of course, for a Dalila, but with little if any trace of the *diablerie* essential to *Viens aider ma faiblesse*, where the Philistine woman, revealing her real self, calls upon her gods to aid her in her seductive arts. The vocal tone is lovely, but too sentimental, and all the liberal "slurring" is quite out of place. In *Ah, mon fils*, as a pitiable, pleading mother, the gifted Sigrid is much more at home, and takes her high A sharp "like a bird."

*M. G. Thill*.—This tenor is at the Paris Opéra, but his name indicates a Belgian or Flemish rather than French origin. Anyhow, he has a remarkably fine voice, powerful, resonant, and agreeable in quality, if now and then just a trifle rough. The traditions of the school are well displayed in both airs—a broad, dramatic style and untiring *sostenuto* in that from *La Traviata*, best known as *De miei bollenti spiriti*, and clear, strong declamation in the *Air de Jean* from Massenet's opera, in which Jean de Reszke first earned fame as a tenor in Paris. The latter is from the prison scene in the third act, and contains some effective but rather fragmentary phrases.

*Fernand Anseau*.—It is a pleasure to hear two of the finest tenor moments in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* so grandly realised as they are by Fernand Anseau in these records. He says to himself—or his voice—"laissez aller"—and it goes, with all imaginable strength, purity, and beauty of tone. One might easily, of course, hear *Ah, lève-toi, Soleil* as powerfully sung in the opera, but not often the salutation to the tomb of his ancestors wherewith *Roméo* bids farewell to life. He is, as a rule, somewhat fatigued by the time that climax arrives and less fit to do it justice. Here the gramophone gets the pull, for in this record you may hear Anseau just as fresh as when he started. The recording is admirable.

*Maria Zamboni*.—The Columbia Company, with fitting enterprise, are helping to complete the selections from *Turandot* in time for the promised production of Puccini's opera at Covent Garden next month. Here are some from Milan that form a welcome addition to the H.M.V. collection already noticed by me; welcome more especially because they are sung by the artists who created the rôles at La Scala last year. There is a pathetic quality in Maria Zamboni's voice that is peculiarly adapted for the music of the slave Liù; a certain fatalistic manner, the lassitude of a creature tired of life, yet who does not depart from it without protest, that is reflected in every phrase. The music itself tells us nothing new, but the singer makes it descriptive and interesting. The recording, as in all these excerpts, is exceedingly clear.

*Francesco Merli*.—Generally speaking, there seems little about the Prince in *Turandot* to distinguish him vocally from other Puccini heroes. He gives you, in the best modern Italian tenor manner, bar after bar that reminds you of old friends—Rodolfo, Cavaradossi, F. B. Pinkerton, and the rest. In these passages he is trying to comfort Liù and to flatter himself that he is bound to overcome the resistance of the wicked Turandot. Both are excellent in their way.

*Bianca Scacciati* and *Francesco Merli*.—The soprano will, I understand, sustain her original rôle at Covent Garden and then will be the time to judge between her and Maria Jeritza, who is also to sustain the part here, as she did in New York. (I hope, at least, that we shall hear both Turandots.) The Italian soprano proves herself in this record a highly dramatic artist, and although her head notes are distinctly less sweet than those of Anne Roselle in the same music, her medium is far pleasanter and more free from tremolo. Her appeal to the Prince not to persevere in his ordeal is boldly declaimed, and his refusal to obey her wish makes the scene dramatically complete.

*John O'Sullivan*.—Here is a foretaste, and a good one, of the coming *Trovatore* revival. Both airs are splendidly given, with no lack of generous and powerful tone. The same tenor is also down for the Prince in *Turandot* and Raoul in the *Huguenots*—I beg pardon, *Gli Ugonotti*.



**Mariano Stabile.**—Simply perfect in his records, even as he was in his wonderful embodiment of Falstaff at our Royal Opera last season! I cannot conceive anything finer than Stabile's rendering of the "Honour" monologue, and here it comes out absolutely "according to plan." Note, moreover, that the exquisite *Quand'ero paggio* is preceded by the whole of the masterly scene with Mistress Ford—musically represented by Natalia de Santis. The entire record, in fact, is a flawless treat. The second disc, giving the selections from *Tosca* and *Otello*, does not stand upon the same high plane. We have had the *Te Deum* much more effectively done by Formichi, even minus the Scala chorus. On the other hand, the drinking song of Iago is given with rousing spirit and *entrain*, well supported by Venturini, Nessi, and the aforesaid chorus.

**La Scala Chorus.**—The Cigarette Girls sing smoothly and in tune. The next thing will be a device for wafting the "smoky" atmosphere of Seville from the gramophone whilst they are doing it. The chorus of slaves from Verdi's forgotten opera, *I Lombardi*, was scarcely worth reviving. It sounds now like Donizetti-and-water. The one in *Aida* a quarter of a century later simply knocked it into the proverbial "three-cocked-hat."

HERMAN KLEIN.



## SONGS

(Some records which defy precise classification will be found among "Choral" reviews.)

### BELTONA.

**Annette Blackwell** (soprano).—*O Waly, Waly* and *The Shepherd and his Fife* (English folk-songs, arr. Cecil J. Sharp). 6074 (10in., 3s.).

**Hughes Macklin** (tenor).—*The old rustic bridge by the mill* (Skelly) and *Marguerite* (White). 1175 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

The pick of the month is the first Beltona record of *Annette Blackwell*, who is well known to wireless listeners and who notably took the part of Mary in Boughton's *Bethlehem* this last Christmas. Really all that need be said of this first record is that each side gives one of those perfect, exquisite miniatures which are among the highest things of music—for in music as in everything else dimensions alone mean nothing. Having said this, to go into details seems superfluous. But one or two special points should be mentioned. To begin with, we have as fine a store of folk-songs in England as anywhere, and hardly any music is now more popular, as you may test on the wireless or at the Coliseum almost any week; yet strangely enough hardly any have been recorded. Altogether, a record which you must not miss.

I have picked out *Macklin* from several half-crown records because I suspect he might be worth recording in "good music" of simpler kinds, say some of Arne. On this record he has clear diction.

### HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

**Anne Thursfield** (mezzo-soprano), accompanied by Ivor Newton. —*L'heure exquise* (Reynaldo Hahn) and *Clair de Lune* (Moonlight, G. Fauré). Both in French. E.452 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

**Peter Dawson** (bass-baritone), accompanied by Gerald Moore. —*Oh, could I but express in song* (Malashkin) and *Sincerity* (Clarke). B.2425 (10in., 3s.).

**Margaret Sheridan** (soprano).—*I know where I'm going* (Irish, arr. Herbert Hughes) and *Danny Boy* (The Londonderry Air, arr. Weatherley). D.A.832 (10in., 6s.).

**Joseph Hislop** (tenor).—*I heard you singing* (Coates), with piano (Percy Kahn), violin (Marjorie Hayward) and 'cello, and *Nightfall at sea* (Phillips). D.A.818 (10in., 6s.).

**Vivien Lambelet** and **Dorothy Lebish**, accompanied by Ernesto Baraldi.—*Venetian Song* (Tosti) and *O, that we two were maying* (Smith). B.2434 (10in., 3s.).

**Walter Glynne** (tenor).—*There is a flower that bloometh* (from Wallace's "Maritana") and *I passed by your window* (Brahe). B.2429 (10in., 3s.).

No singer's titles arouse more keen anticipation than those of *Anne Thursfield*. These are not the first recordings of Hahn's

(called Kahn's on the label) *L'heure exquise* and Fauré's *Clair de Lune*, but this of the two together may be eagerly received by many. Either the recording is a shade less good than Anne Thursfield's last, or else her voice is a shade off colour. Yet the Hahn is very beautiful, and the Fauré only slightly less so—anyhow if ever half of a month's song records were as good as this we should think the millennium had come.

**Peter Dawson** has, among all his songs, sung so many whose very lives depend on rhythmical and general technical and emotional distortion, such as this *Sincerity*, that his singing of the Malashkin song is very slightly tinged with such maltreatment. Apart from that, he is as impressive and telling as ever, except that he might perhaps be even more dramatic, and also that his breathing does not seem quite perfect—a failing which, however slight, I never remember in him before.

What with her Irish nature and her grand opera voice, *Margaret Sheridan* should excel in two such songs as *I know where I'm going* and *The Londonderry Air*. Personally I don't feel that she does. Perhaps this should be taken as a more than usually personal opinion. But she is hardly whimsical enough in *I know where I'm going*, nor simple enough in *The Londonderry Air*. It seems as though she were over-sophisticated by her operatic work. Of all the arrangements of *The Londonderry Air*, *Danny Boy* is one of the better, though not as good, I think, as Stanford's (*Emer's Farewell*).

*I heard you singing* and, perhaps to a less degree, *Nightfall at Sea*, are of the Landon Ronald type, and therefore give opportunity for tremendous effect to a great operatic tenor. *Hislop* rises fully to this opportunity. Why is the 'Cellist's name not given?

The two old popular sentimental duets recorded by *Vivien Lambelet* and *Dorothy Lebish* are hardly likely ever to have been, or yet to be, more charmingly done.

*Glynne* gives a very fair record of the old *Maritana* favourite. But he needs to polish his diction, to shun tremolo and the tenor's disease of lachrymosity. His *Brahe* is as expressive as any I can remember.

### COLUMBIA.

**W. F. Watt** (tenor).—*Fiddler of Dooney* (W. B. Yeats and T. F. Dunhill) and *The lark of the clear air* (Sir S. Ferguson, arr. M. Esposito). 4296 (10in., 3s.).

**Doris Vane** (soprano) with orchestra conducted by K. Ernest Irving.—*A dream garden* (I. Blankensee and M. F. Phillips) and *Love's wonderful music* (Valse Song, de Zulueta). 4295 (10in., 3s.).

*W. F. Watt* becomes more and more interesting. He still needs a little more sophistication in his outlook, and some polish to his singing. His breathing seems a little faulty. *The lark of the clear air* has much of the Irish folk-song type of beauty. Those who do not know *The Fiddler of Dooney* will find it is a very spirited song. It is all that it should be, and yet it never makes me really excited. Perhaps it needs an Irishman to make it live—an Irish composer, that is, for as it stands it has never been given more spirit than by Watt (this Irish folk-song singer, surely an Irishman?) It seems as if Dunhill had consciously striven to be Irish, having learnt through the medium of that cosmopolitan Irishman, Stanford. One might perhaps analyse the subject still further.

The other Columbia record is of a type which is presumably not intended to be criticised seriously by the reviewer. There is any amount of sentiment in the renderings, though *Doris Vane's* diction is not perfect.

### VOCALION.

**Ethel Hook** (contralto).—*Just a little lady* (Arthur Crocker) with orchestra, and *A little love-nest for two* (Hermann Löhr) accompanied by Edith Page. X.9976 (10in., 3s.).

Ethel Hook's diction is all that is needed; she is in good voice, well recorded, and thoroughly soulful.

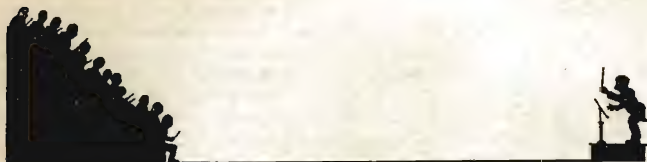
### PARLOPHONE.

**Reginald Whitehead** (bass) with orchestra.—*Song of the Bow* and *The Lord is my Light* (Allitsen). E.10564 (12in., 4s.).

Whitehead has a full, pleasant-toned voice which he uses effectively except for frequent mouthing of vowels. Of these two songs one is of the pretentious quasi-Mendelssohn "religioso" type, the other is better, of the "good old English yeomen" type. Of other music he might give a tolerably good account—how good remains to be seen.

C. M. C.





## CHORAL

### HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

Eton College Musical Society, with organ.—**Carmen Etonense** (Barnby), **Jerusalem** (Blake and C. H. H. Parry), **Just as the tide was flowing** (English folk-song, arr. R. Vaughan Williams) and **Bobby Shaftoe** (Northumbrian song, arr. W. G. Whittaker). C.1322 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

The Viceroy of India, certain Governors General, and other Old Etonians who hold big administrative posts will receive for their "Fourth of June" celebrations an H.M.V. record "with the compliments of the Lower Master of Eton." On this record they will find their Eton Carmen, "sung in the old school by the present generation of scholars."

The recording is adequately successful, so that the record should be eagerly sought by all Old Etonians, and by many other people also. The three other songs on the record are not as musically effective as they might be, owing to excessive echo. And surely *Bobby Shaftoe* is too slow? At any rate, it is much slower than usual.

### COLUMBIA.

Dora Labbette, Harold Williams, Hubert Eisdell, Dennis Noble, Robert Easton and the Hallé Chorus, with orchestra, conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty.—**By the wayside**, from Elgar's "The Apostles." L.1968 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

The Sheffield Choir, conducted by Sir Henry Coward, unaccompanied.—**In this hour of softened splendour** (Smith and Pinsuti) and **An Italian Salad—A Musical Jest** (a play on musical terms à la an operatic finale, Genée). Soloist, Stanley Beckett. 9194 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

The B.B.C. Choir, in Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, conducted by Stanford Robinson, with W. G. Webber at the organ.—**Hymns—Onward, Christian Soldiers** (Baring Gould and Sullivan) and **Eternal Father, strong to save** (Whiting and Dykes). 4297 (10in., 3s.).

The Salisbury Singers, unaccompanied.—**O hush thee, my baby** (Sullivan) and **O, peaceful night** (Edward German). 4298 (10in., 3s.).

"DAILY EXPRESS" COMMUNITY SINGING.

3,000 Voices, in De Montfort Hall, Leicester, with the Leicester Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Geoffrey Shaw.—**Drink to me only with thine eyes** (Ben Jonson and Anonymous) and **Aberystwyth** (Jesu, Lover of my soul, Joseph Parry). 4290 (10in., 3s.).

1,250 Voices, at the Columbia London factory, led by Thomas P. Ratchiff.—**Hullabaloo-Balay** (from *Six Sea Shanties*, arr. S. Taylor Harris) with Arthur Sherlow as soloist, and **John Brown's body** (traditional) and **Home, sweet home** (Bishop). **Annie Laurie** and **Auld Lang Syne** (traditional). 4291-2 (two 10in., 3s. each).

Among the finest things that new recording and new gramophones give us are certain big choral records. Hardly a month goes by without an addition to these. But these mere samples are becoming a little tantalising. Wouldn't a few complete works of the type of the *B minor Mass* be just as practicable as, say, the *Ninth Symphony*? *By the wayside* is Elgar's setting of the Beatitudes, with Biblical comments. Some detailed criticisms of this record could be made, one could suggest one or two changes in the soloists, and Columbia still give too much bad tone to be ignored; but if this last fault could be corrected one would be very grateful to have more records like this.

There is little but diction to criticise in the latest *Sheffield Choir* record. The Pinsuti is a typical commonplace nineteenth century part song. But the *Italian Salad* is great fun, and splendidly done, for anyone who has a good vocabulary of musical terms at his lightest summons. To many others it will probably give great amusement simply as a skit on Italian opera.

The *B.B.C. Choir's* hymns are very good, except that they are rather too loud and that all except a little is sung in harmony, with rather too much harmony. Recording, as still frequently with Columbia, is far too fierce.

It is no mere chance that practically none of Sullivan's serious music has lived. We could do with some of it revived, but the sooner some that has lived is allowed to die the better for all of us. There is very little wrong, however, with *The Salisbury Singers'* recording of this feeble Sullivan and of the similar German.

I haven't compared this *Aberystwyth* with its *Community Singing* performance which "P. L." liked so much last month, but this one is quite good. But as for *Drink to me only*, this little air is suddenly become extraordinarily moving, given thus instead of with far-fetched harmonic and other tricking out. Its fine melodic build, and, above all, its simple, quiet emotional beauty are a sudden revelation, even to some of us who already recognised it as a song of simple, pleasant beauty. It would be a great thing for someone to tell us who is beyond doubt its composer (there are already well-supported theories). Surely he can't be a one-tune man? *Home, sweet home* and *John Brown's Body* (both casually and inaccurately disposed of as "traditional" on the label) are very clear. In *Hullabaloo-Balay* every word of the soloist's is perfect, and the community has nothing to sing but the title, and, as I remarked last month, this is one of the giddiest of all sea shanties. 4292 goes with a swing, but is, I think, the least valuable of the three; certainly it is the sorest trial to needles and sound-boxes—but unfortunately I still find very many of Columbia's choral records and some of their song records equally trying.

### PARLOPHONE.

The Irmelr Choir.—**Ave Maria** (Arcadelt) and **Gloria sei die gesungen**, chorale from the cantata, **Sleepers, Wake** (*Wachet auf*, J. S. Bach). E.10565 (12in., 4s.).

The *Ave Maria* is very lovely. It is accompanied, or rather contains instrumental passages, by strings—I think solo strings. So many versions are heard of this lovely sixteenth century setting, that one wonders which is the original. I cannot check it now, but the form in which it is here recorded is probably practically the original. Many people will find it is one of their unnamed musical favourites. I have an advance pressing of this record, and cannot at the moment review the Bach Chorale.

### ZONOPHONE.

Church Choir, with organ.—**Magnificat** from C. V. Stanford's **Service in B flat, and O for the wings of a dove** (Mendelssohn's *Hear my Prayer*). A.318 (12in., 4s.).

Why is this *Magnificat* said on the label to be "arranged" by Stanford? It is as much original composition, so far as we know, as music ever was. It is moreover one of the finest pieces of church music written for centuries. The recording is very good on the whole; you must choose for yourself between this and Columbia's recent version. Personally, I find neither completely satisfying. The Mendelssohn is spoilt by a soloist's bad tremolo.

### VOCALION.

"The Mikado" (Gilbert and Sullivan).—**Duet, Act II., The flowers that bloom in the spring**, by Messrs. O'Connor and Thorne with **Trio, and Quartet, Act II., Madrigal—Brightly dawns our wedding day**, by Misses Otley and Coxon and Messrs. O'Connor and Buckley. X.9978.

**Willow, Tit Willow** (Act II.) by John Thorne, and **Finale, Act II., For he's gone and married Yum-Yum**, by Chorus, X.9979. All with orchestra. (Two 10in., 3s. each.)

*The Mikado* has quite recently been recorded complete by H.M.V. Here are some of its most popular numbers on two Vocalion records, at their cheapest price. They are quite good enough to satisfy anyone who does not wish to go the whole hog, or to pay for single records at the higher price. I like Thorne (whose Aco records have been so praised in this paper) the best in *Tit Willow*. He wisely doesn't try to copy anyone else (or so it seems), but is just himself in it. If there is any fault it is that he is too respectable, as also with O'Connor in *The flowers that bloom*. Diction, excepting Thorne's, is not very clear. Intonation is a wee bit doubtful in the so-called *Madrigal* (which, *pace* Gilbert, is really a Ballett). The orchestra is inclined to be too loud. Those who record such music should remember that it was scored for a theatre orchestra, whose position makes it far less telling than the concert-room orchestra.

C. M. C.



## BAND RECORDS

The playing of the **Welsh Guards Band** in the first *Peer Gynt Suite* (Aco G.16183-4) is rather patchy. In the two slow movements—*Morning* and *The Death of Ase*—the band is slightly out of tune in places and the score directions are obeyed rather too literally, making the general effect rather rigid. The playing is better in the two faster movements—*Anitra's Dance* and *In the Hall of the Mountain King*. The recording throughout is good and that of the basses and tympani particularly so. The final crash in *In the Hall of the Mountain King* is disappointingly feeble for the new process of recording.

*The Jolly Airman* (Beltona 1190) is an average march and playing and recording are both good. The reverse of this record is occupied by the *Marche Russe* from Luigini's Russian Ballet Suite. This is good, tuneful music, brightly played and well recorded.

The **Royal Air Force Band** seems to be very enterprising in seeking for and finding good arrangements of music that is rather out of the ordinary run for military bands. I think that they go to American publishing houses for much of their music. Chaminade's *Pas de Cymbals* (H.M.V., C.1318) is an example of this enterprise, and makes a very attractive record. This music is written in a pseudo-Spanish rhythm and the performance in this case is brilliant in the best sense of that much abused word. *Evening Bells* (Eilenberg) affords a nice contrast and the playing prevents the touch of sentimentality from becoming sickly. The recording is excellent, except for one or two echoes towards the end of the Chaminade piece. These may be caused by the building in which the record was made, or they may be the effect of a sudden loud note making a "wave" in the thread next to the one in which the needle is resting. That does happen at times.

The Imperial Company have chosen two very popular numbers for inclusion in the latest record by the **Irish Guards Band** (1731). *Loin du Bal* (Gillet) is a favourite piece of restaurant music of the better type and *Ça c'est Paris* (Padilla) is written in the rhythm that the same composer popularised with *Valencia*. The playing is all that could be desired and the only fault I find with the recording is that I could do with a little more bass.

Two of Mr. Ord Hume's marches are played by **St. Hilda Colliery Band** on Regal G.8785. *To the Fray* is decidedly good and the playing is very fine. *Aide de Camp* is not so good and the band is evidently of the same opinion, as they do not put as much spirit and dash into their playing. The recording in both cases is magnificent.

I should like to advise all those who want a new process record of the *Poet and Peasant Overture* and who have not already bought either the version played by the Grenadier Guards for the Columbia Co. or that played by the Coldstream Guards for the H.M.V. Co., to buy at once Voc. K.05298. This is labelled "Concert Hall Performance" and is obviously so. The recording is really superb. The echo is controlled to a nicety and that bit of hardness in *forte* passages has practically disappeared. I like the arrangement used and the playing of the **Life Guards Band** is impeccable. The recording of the tympani at the commencement is worthy of special mention. I should like to add just one more item to my paean of praise by complimenting Lieut. Gibson on his unusual but effective way of negotiating the break between the two sides. The tempo is slackened a trifle with what I consider to be a very happy result.

Military band arrangements of the *Hallelujah Chorus* from "The Messiah" and *The Heavens are Telling* from Haydn's "Creation" are not everybody's meat, but those to whom they appeal will hardly find a better record than the one by **Black Diamonds Band** (Zono. A.315). The band are equally good in the staccato phrases of the former as in the legato playing in the latter. The recording is excellent and the individual "voices" in the semi-fugal parts of the *Hallelujah Chorus* stand out very clearly.

The newest record of the famous *Colonel Bogey March* (Zono. 2875) is played by the **Band of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders**, and, being conducted by the composer, the band play it at real march pace. This is as it should be, as this march is too good to be spoilt by virtuosic trimmings. The recording is good and better than it is in *The Black Bear* and *Blue Bonnet over the Border*, two traditional airs played by pipers and accompanied by the same band. I confess I found the latter rather dull.

W. A. C.

## NEW-POOR RECORDS

Machine used, Peridulce cabinet; sound-box, Peridulce; needles, Euphonic.

ACO.—The best 10in. VIOLIN AND PIANO record I have this month *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* (2s. 6d.) played by Peggy Cochrane.

BELTONA.—I like best this month the TENOR song *The Old Rustic Bridge* (2s. 6d.) and next to that I should put the BASS song *The Adjutant* (2s. 6d.) The POPULAR SONG *Shepherd of the Hills* (2s. 6d.) is sung by John Roberts. A sweet FOX TROT played by a sweet-toned band *When Lights are Low* (2s. 6d.) The prettiest SCOTS number in all the catalogue, a dear little song about *Wee Willie Winkie* (2s. 6d.) who "freish fra' the toon, rins oopsteers and doon-steers in his nicht-goön." A BANJO solo so pretty and clever, so well played and well recorded that I would not hesitate to recommend it to even so good a judge as the Prince of Wales, *Moonlight on the Heather* (2s. 6d.).

H.M.V.—Everyone interested in GRAND ORGAN music will want at least one example of the compositions of "that master of music and of the microphone" Sir Walford Davies, *Solemn Melody* (4s. 6d.).

HOMOCHORD.—This list, already famous for PIANOFORTE recordings, this month adds the two first electrically recorded discs by Gertrude Meller, *Polonaise* (Op. 26, No. 1, Chopin) 2s. 6d. and *Study in D flat* Liszt (4s.). The sweet-toned SMALL MILITARY BAND plays *The Magic Flute Overture* (4s.). There is a nice 10in. ORGAN solo of a very delicate character, Dvorák's *Humoresque* (2s. 6d.).

IMPERIAL.—I select the CELESTE PIPE ORGAN record, *The Palms* (2s.).

PARLOPHONE.—GRAND ORGAN records from the Brompton Oratory are a new feature of this list that will be generally welcomed. I prefer the Bach disc, *Fugue in G*. (4s. 6d.).

There are two delightful discs by a SMALL ORCHESTRA (Dajos Bela's) *Wedding Serenade* (4s. 6d.). Edith Lorand plays a VIOLIN solo *Schön Rosmarin* (Kreisler, 4s. 6d.), quite delightfully. Quite the best TENOR performance of *Ay, Ay, Ay*, is on a 10in. disc. The quintessence of JAZZ is found in a new addition to the Parlophone ranks, Sam Lanin and his famous players. The records are extraordinary, not "pep" but cayenne, and every ball-room ought to have examples. The first records are in *drag* fox-trot rhythm *Blue Skies* (3s.) and *It made you Happy* (3s.).

V.F.—Of all Beethoven's music there is to my mind none more romantic, less suggestive of piano practice in a ladies' boarding school, than *Leonora Overture*, I love it, and am heartily glad to see it put on to a 12in. disc by the Royal Symphony Orchestra and priced at only 4s. The performance is fresh and bright and the recording is so perfect that instrumental characteristic is truly rendered, *even to the timpani*. There are also ORCHESTRAL selections of *Iolanthe* (4s.) and *Princess Charming* (4s.). Ten inch numbers at 2s. 6d. include the London FLUTE QUARTETTE playing *Moto Perpetuo* and Nikola Fusati singing (in Italian) an extract from *Marta*.

VOCALION.—Of all British recording basses I think Malcolm McEachern the best, his latest song *The Deathless Army* is a perfect example and no one ought to miss it. The orchestral accompaniment showing both kettle drums and side drums is magnificent.

WINNER.—Bobby Gray, the Whispering Baritone sings the POPULAR SONG *Talking to the Moon* (2s. 6d.). There are three discs of magnificently vigorous recordings showing the unusually sweet-toned registers of the English "Christie" organ at the Wimbledon Cinema, I will mention one, *Because I love you* (2s. 6d.).

ULTIMATE SELECTION.—ORCHESTRAL: \*\*\**Leonora* (V.F.). BASS: \*\*\**The Deathless Army* (VOCALION). TENOR: *Ay, Ay, Ay* (PARLO). SMALL ORCHESTRA: *Wedding Serenade* (PARLO). PIANOFORTE: *Study in D flat* (Liszt) (HOMO). SMALL MILITARY BAND: *The Magic Flute* (HOMO). VIOLIN: *Schön Rosmarin* (PARLO). FLUTE QUARTETTE: *Moto Perpetuo*, WINNER. GRAND ORGAN: *Solemn Melody* (H.M.V.). CINEMA ORGAN: *Because I Love You*, (WINNER). SCOT-TISH: *Wee Willie Winkie* (BELTONA). JAZZ: *Blue Skies* (PARLO).

H. T. B.



## MISCELLANEOUS

Let me first of all deal with the relics of the April bulletins, the *Actuelles* (2s. 6d. each), *Beltonas* (2s. 6d. each), *Brunswick* (3s. each), *Imperials* (2s. each), *Parlophones* (2s. 6d.) and the mid-month H.M.V.'s (3s. each). There is a timely selection from *Rose Marie* which seems remarkably fresh as played by **Edith Lorand's Orchestra on Parlo. E.5759 (2s. 6d.) and some gypsy tunes on Brunswick 3118 which will add to the high renown of the **A and P Gypsies**, though the tunes are not as attractive as usual. A really capital piano record with *Sweet Man*, played by **Frank Banta**, and a *Queen High* medley played by **Fairchild and Rainger** (H.M.V. B.2431) is worth noting, but **Jesse Crawford** on a cinema organ (H.M.V., B.2430) and **Fredric Fradkin** on his violin (Brunswick 3334) are merely making the best of their powers in poor tunes. **Ferera and Poaluki**, Hawaiian guitarists, appear on *Actuelle* 11303 and *Imperial* 1729, and I prefer the latter partly because the vocal chorus by **Vernon Dalhart** relieves what always strikes me as an almost unendurable monotony.**

The *Song of the Vagabonds*, sung by **Dennis King** and chorus, and *Only a Rose*, sung by **Carolyn Thomson**—both songs from *The Vagabond King* at the Winter Garden Theatre—make such a thoroughly desirable record that I expect to hear no better versions of them, and am quite sorry for **Tom Kinniburgh**, who does his good best with the same songs on *Imperial* 1733 and would otherwise be recommended. The following I praise without comment as all being worth trying and buying: **Macy and Smalle**, *Hello! Swanee* and *Deed I Do* (Brunswick 3398); **Melville Gideon**, *Each little day and I realized* (H.M.V., B.2428); **Gladys Rice**, *Chérie*, *I Love You*, and **Gene Austin**, *Sunday* (H.M.V., B.2432); **Nick Lucas**, *Because I Love You* and *When you're lonely* (Brunswick 3367); **Alec Ward** in the best version of *Alice's 'Ouse* that I've heard (*Actuelle* 11308); and **Peter Andrews**, a good imitator of *Wendall Hall*, in *I'm tellin' the birds* (*Beltona* 1178). To these add **Willard Robison**, who gives his own atmosphere most attractively to *Hugs and Kisses* and *I love to call you my sweetheart* (*Actuelle* 11309); and **Jack Smith** in yet another miracle of recording in *If I didn't know your husband* and *So will I* (H.M.V., B.2435).

The *Shepherd of the Hills* continues to call, this time **Peter Rush** (*Imperial* 1734), **Hal Roberts** (*Actuelle* 11312) and **John Roberts** (*Beltona* 1173): the first is best. **Talbot O'Farrell** (*Imperial* 1736 and 1737), **Dick Henderson** (*Imperial* 1735) and **Hardy Williamson** (*Actuelle* 11304) will not disappoint their respective admirers; and of the rest I should choose the **Smith Bros.** on *Actuelle* 11310 and the **Radio Imps** on *Imperial* 1732, though they are not among the best duettists available.

The May Aco records (2s. 6d.) bring us **Vaughn de Leath** (G.16191), hitherto only known on Columbia, singing two duets with **Jerry Macy** in the usual American style introduced to this country, I think by Lee White and Clay Smith. I like it only just less than the best, of its kind. So too with the **Just Four Fellers** in vocal syncopation of breathless audacity, who sing *I'm Sailing off to China* and *Tell me To-night* (G.16179). **Irving Kaufman**, the free lance, sings *Hello! Bluebird* and, again in the *Wendall Hall* tradition, *I'm tellin' the Birds* (G.16178); this is, perhaps, his best record. **Jack Kaufman**, a comedian, I should like to praise because his manner of singing is fresh in *My Baby's Back* and *Where do you work*,

*John?* (G.16182), but expect something more satisfying another month; **Eileen Andjelkovitch** plays the violin charmingly, with "vocal interludes" (baritone) in *Chérie*, *I love you* and *First kiss of love* (G.16175); **Billy Desmond**, **Bob Johnson**, **Bobby Sanders** and **Harry Carlton** contribute two records (G.16180 and G.16181); **Harry Bidgood** and **Sam Bogen** are oddly ineffective in piano duets (G.16174); and there's a *Hawaiian Blues* (G.16176) which is the dismalest thing I ever heard.

Of the May Vocalions (3s. each) none is outstanding. **Gladys Moncrieff** is efficient as ever in two songs from *Castles in the Air* (X.9992); **Dorrie Dene** her cheery, voluble self in X.9983, though not without pathos in *It made you happy*; **Ken Edwards** in syncopated piano versions of *Silver Rose* and *Meadow Lark* (X.9977) is a shade too clever; **The Melody Makers** are not worth the extra sixpence (X.9985) as compared with the **Just Four Fellers** mentioned above; **Victor Carne**, tenor, has nothing wrong except his pronunciation of English, *Tosti's My Dreams* and *For a Kiss* (X.9980); and **Drigo's Serenade** and **Thomé's Minuetto** played on the Tivoli cinema organ by **F. Hampton-Smith** are excellent of their kind (X.9982). Altogether a dullish bulletin.

Taking the *Columbias*, mid-April and May, the H.M.V.'s for May and the *Zonophones* for May together, the best seem to me to be two syncopated male quartet records—**The Ramblers** in *Dreaming of Brown Eyes* and *In our Love Canoe* (Col. 4305, 3s.) and **The Revellers** in *Mary Lou* and *In a little Spanish town* (H.M.V. B.2443, 3s.): **Layton and Johnstone** in *Blue Skies and Meadow Lark* (Col. 4306, 3s.) or **Johnny Marvin and Ed. Smalle** in *Blue Skies* and **Gene Austin** in *I've grown lonesome* (H.M.V., B.2441, 3s.), and **Tommy Handley and Company** in a first-class burlesque, *The Disorderly Room* (Zono. 2900, 2s. 6d.). **Cyril Newton** is always accomplished and well accompanied (Col. 4307 and 4308, 3s. each), and the clearness of the words—as in the two quartets mentioned above—makes me disappointed by the efforts of that favourite, **Carl Brisson**, who will be welcome to many on Zono. 2901 and 2902 (2s. 6d. each). He will do much better with experience. The *Beau Geste* song is available, sung by **Foster Richardson** on Zono. 2896 (2s. 6d.), and **Barrington Hooper** contributes two charming ballads, *Howard Fisher's Phyllida* and *Edward German's To an English Rose*, to the same bulletin (2895, 2s. 6d.), which also has a good *Vagabond King Selection* (2893, 2s. 6d.), and the same songs from it which I have already mentioned, sung this time by **Foster Richardson** and **Barrington Hooper** (2897, 2s. 6d.). Columbia gives us three "exclusive" records from "Castles in the Air" (9190 and 9191, 12in., 4s. 6d. each, and 4289, 3s.) with **John Steele** and **Helen Gilliland** in their original parts. These will find favour. Zonophone continues the Gilbert and Sullivan series with "vocal gems" from *H.M.S. Pinafore*, a sound performance (A.317, 4s.). **Frank Crumit** is welcome back again in *High up in the Hills* and *Crazy Words* (H.M.V., B.2440, 3s.), and **Gene Austin** has another record to himself (H.M.V., B.2442, 3s.), while **Layton and Johnstone** have a special issue of *Black Bottom* and *Babying You* (Col. 4303, 3s.) and *Because I love you* and *Bye Bye Blackbird* (4304), which are all as well sung and recorded as you would expect. But many will prefer **Deslys and Clark** in *Because I love you* (Zono. 2898, 2s. 6d.), an excellent record.

For the benefit of those who know **Charles Wreford's** Devonshire humour, let me mention a fine recording of his *Oratorio* on Col. 4299 (3s.).  
PEPPERING.



WHAT YOUR OWN JOURNAL SAYS ABOUT ZONOPHONE RECORDS—  
'THE GRAMOPHONE,' April, 1927:  
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REMEMBER—WHATEVER YOUR TASTE—THERE IS CERTAIN TO BE SOMETHING OF  
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# Electrical Records





## DANCE NOTES

By J. W. G.

In the following notes thick type denotes a high standard of excellence on both sides. Two stars and one star are the next degrees, and where there is no star at all, the records are only fairly good. Distinctly inferior ones are omitted. I have compared the records made by the Piccadilly Revels Band both in a public hall and in the studio, and have come to the unwilling conclusion that in the case of dance records only, the studio recording is preferable; the bigness of the hall tends to blur the "snap" of the playing. What a lot of bands have taken to commencing with a vocal chorus in the last two months!

ACO (2s. 6d.).

- 16185.—\**Bye-bye, Blackbird* and \**When Tommy Atkins taught the Chinese how to Charleston* (Harry Bidgood's Orchestra). The latter tune is very well played, but quite unworthy of the playing.
- 16187.—\*\**Parée* (6/8 Paso-doble) and *Shepherd of the hills* (Harry Bidgood's Orchestra). The rhythm of the former is distinctly good.
- 16188.—*Crazy words, crazy tune* and *Take your finger out of your mouth* (the Lyricals). The former has a Black Bottom rhythm, as compared with the Charleston rhythm of the Imperial.
- 16189.—*Who do you love?* and \*\**If I didn't know your husband* (Lyricals). *Who do you love* is a very poor tune. The latter is played in slow rhythm.
- 16190.—*Don't be angry with me* (Cleveland Society Orchestra) and \*\**Meadow Lark* (Royal Troubadours). An excellent tune.

ACTUELLE (2s. 6d.).

The Actuelle tone is quite different from all other makes; they do not appear to aim at reality, but merely to specialise in bands which play elaborate "hot" rhythms, in a manner second to none; but let me point out that the Charleston danced in this country is the "flat" Charleston and does not require this type of playing.

- 11291.—*Learn to smile* (Casino Dance Orchestra) and \*\**Why d'ya roll those eyes* ("Princess Charming") (Willy Creager and his Orchestra). Paul Whiteman's record last month has spoiled me for any other versions of this tune.
- 11293.—\**Caring for you* and \*\**Oh! Marie* (Carmena Dance Orchestra). I like this Neapolitan tune, but why does the singer call the "Lido" the "Liddo"—all my Italian friends say this is wrong.
- 11295.—\*\**The Chant* and *A sweet letter from you* (the Original Memphis Five). The former is outstanding for "hot" syncopation; the latter is a very slow blues.
- 11297.—*A little bit bad* and \*\**Drifting and dreaming* (Fred. Rich and his Orchestra). Not to compare with the Aco. version last month.
- 11298.—*Hello! Swanee, hello!* and *That's a good girl* (Lew Gold and his Orchestra). The latter a smooth fox-trot.
- 11299.—*Meadow Lark* (Harry Reser and his Orchestra) and *My baby knows how* (Sam Lanin and his Orchestra).
- 11300.—*Sally's not the same old Sally and Toe to toe* (Black Diamond Serenaders). The latter is slow time.
- 11301.—*Idolising* and \*\**I've got the girl* (John Sylvestre and his Orchestra).

BELTONE (2s. 6d.).

- 1174.—*Shepherd of the hills* and \*\**Hello! Bluebird* (Avenue Dance Orchestra).

- 1183.—*A little girl, a little boy* (waltz) (Sunny South Dance Orchestra) and *I've got a C sharp Mamma* (American Dance Orchestra). The latter is a slow fox-trot.
- 1187.—*Who'll be the one?* and *Bolshevik* (one-step) (New Orleans Dance Orchestra).

BRUNSWICK (3s.).

I was surprised last month at the falling off in these records but this month they have more than made up for it—a well-nigh perfect set of records!

- 3359.—\*\**En'rything's peaches* and \**Lonely acres* (Ernie Golder and his Hotel McAlpin Orchestra). The former has an impelling Charleston rhythm; the other excellently played, but not a good tune.
- 3361.—*Sugar-foot stomp* and \*\**Snag it* (blues) (Savannah Syncopators).
- 3374.—*If you can't land 'er* (one-step) and *Where do ya work-a, John?* (6/8 one-step) (Six Jumping Jacks). These for "pep" and fun!
- 3394.—*When day is done* and \*\**There ain't no maybe* (Harry Archer and his Orchestra). The latter is a Charleston.
- 3401.—\**Who'll be the one* and \**Lonely eyes* (Ben Bernie and his Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra). Both smooth fox-trots.
- 3407.—*Washboard blues* (blues) and *That's no bargain* (Red Nichols and his Five Pennies). Who could resist the rhythm of the former? The latter is a very quick Charleston.
- 3414.—*Hello! Swanee, hello!* and \*\**Muddy water* (Ben Bernie and his Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra). The latter has an appropriately slow Black Bottom rhythm.
- 3415.—*Everything's made for love* and *The song of the wanderer* (Vincent Lopez and his Casa Lopez Orchestra).
- 3426.—*Blue Skies* and *Since I found you* (Vincent Lopez and his Casa Lopez Orchestra). These are both good sentimental smooth fox-trots, the latter being rather like *Waiting for the Moon*.

COLUMBIA (3s.).

I think Ted Lewis gives me more pleasure than any other band. Admittedly his playing is often old-fashioned, but he is one of the few leaders whose arrangements are made to suit the tunes, not the fashion of the moment. His record this month bears this out. The playing of Paul Ash and his Orchestra is quite outstanding and the Piccadilly Revels Band continues to be first rate.

- 4301.—\*\**Baby* and \**Lantern of Love*.
- 4302.—\**I would like to fondle you* and \*\**Rainbow of your Smiles*. I'm not favourably impressed with the tunes from "Castles in the Air," but these four examples of them are most excellently played by Debroy Somers' Band.
- 4309.—*Tiger Rag* and *If you see Sally* (Ted Lewis and his Band). The former is in slow time.
- 4312.—*All's well that ends well* and \*\**Cuckoo* (Piccadilly Revels Band). The latter a good Charleston.
- 4313.—*Cherie, I love you* (waltz) and *Rhythm is the Thing* (Piccadilly Revels Band). The waltz is perfectly played.
- 4315.—\*\**John o' dreams* (waltz) and \**I might have kissed one girl* (Percival Mackey's Band). Two tunes from "My Son John"; both good for their tempo.
- 4321.—\*\**If* ("The Desert Song") and \**The Desert Song* (waltz) (Piccadilly Revels Band).
- 4322.—*The Riff Song* ("Desert Song") and *One Alone* ("Desert Song") (Earl Carroll's Vanities Orchestra).
- 4323.—*Take in the sun and I'm telling the birds* (Paul Ash and his Orchestra). The former is not quite as good as the Brunswick of two months ago, but the latter is far the best record I have heard of the tune.
- 4324.—*Sam, the old accordion man* (Al Lentz and his Orchestra) and *Hello! Swanee, Hello!* (Art Kahn and his Orchestra).

HIS MASTER'S VOICE (3s.).

I cannot conceive why the Company has issued two records of the *Riff Song* and *One alone* side by side. The speed of the Savoy records is colossal.

MID APRIL.

- B.5224.—\**Only a rose* and \*\**Song of the Vagabonds* (International Novelty Orchestra). Two quick, smooth fox-trots from "The Vagabond King."



- B.5226.—\*\**Georgia Home* and \*\**Back Beats* (Savoy Orpheans). The latter is a quiet Charleston.
- B.5227.—*I love the moonlight* and \**The cat* (Savoy Orpheans). I mistrust all tunes about "moonlight"—this is no exception.
- B.5228.—*Stop it—I love it* and *Take in the sun* (Savoy Orpheans). Both very quick. The former is not to be compared with last month's *Aco*, and having heard the Brunswick and Columbia versions I cannot recommend the latter.
- B.5229.—*The Sphinx* (Savoy Orpheans) and \*\**Crazy words, crazy tune* (Savoy Havana). The latter has a good Black Bottom rhythm.
- B.5230.—\**Idolising* (Savoy Orpheans), very quick, and \*\**The Kickapoo trail* (Savoy Havana).
- B.5231.—\**Prove it* and \**Oh, Marie* (Savoy Havana). Both quick.
- B.5232.—\*\**It all depends on you* and *What does it matter?* (waltz) (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra). The latter a trying tune, quite well played.
- B.5233.—\*\**The Riff Song* ("Desert Song") and *One alone* ("Desert Song") (Nat Shilkret and his Orchestra). The playing of this latter is not as good as that of the Orpheans.
- B.5234.—\**One alone* and *The Riff Song* ("Desert Song") (Savoy Orpheans). The *Riff Song* here is very poor compared with Nat Shilkret's—none of them are as good as the Columbia.
- B.5235.—*If* ("Desert Song") and *The Desert Song* (waltz) (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra).
- B.5239.—*Learn to Smile* (Savoy Orpheans) and *Shine bright moon* (*Blue Mazurka*, waltz) (Sylvians).
- B.5237.—\*\**I can't believe that you're in love with me* and \**Since you whispered "I love you"* (Savoy Havana).
- B.5240.—\**Not very long ago* (waltz) (Savoy Havana) and \**You can't take away my dreams* (waltz) (Sylvians).
- B.5243.—*Perhaps you'll think of me* (waltz) and *Savoy Irish Waltz* (*Londonderry Air*) (Sylvians).
- B.5236.—*I'm going to follow the rainbow* and *Sam, the old accordion man* (Jack Hylton's Hyltonians). The latter is better than the Columbia.
- B.5238.—*Old Spain* (Paso-doble) and *Oh! Pimpinalla* (Paso-doble) (Rio Grande Tango Band). In *Old Spain* we have a correct Paso-doble, unfortunately played too fast. The latter is of the 6/8 variety.
- B.5242.—*Give me a ukelele and a ukelele baby* and *Ev'rything's peaches* (Irving Aaronson and his Commanders). The former very like *Ukelele Lullaby*.
- B.5201.—*Down on the banks of old Yazoo* (Nat Shilkret and his Orchestra) and *Don't sing Aloha when I go away* (Waring's Pennsylvanians). Both slow rhythm. The latter is a fascinating tune based on *Aloha-oe*.

## IMPERIAL (2s.).

A disappointing set of records, compared with last month's. What has happened to Sam Lanin's band?

- 1724.—\**Song of the vagabonds* ("Vagabond King") (Lou Gold and his Orchestra); \*\**To-night you belong to me* (waltz) (Adrian Schubert's Salon Orchestra). This has been labelled "Fox-trot" in error. Just a wee bit fast.
- 1725.—\*\**Crazy words, crazy time* and *Idolising* (Hollywood Dance Orchestra). The former is a good Charleston, but I can't like *Idolising*.
- 1726.—*I'm telling the birds* and *High, high up in the hills* (Bill Perry's Entertainers). I like the singing in this—it is unobtrusive.

## PARLOPHONE (2s. 6d.).

This company has produced several really first-rate discs. Harry Reser seems to put more life into his playing than I have ever heard before, and, *en passant*, how much better he sounds here than on the Actuelle. The two "R." numbers are 3s. each.

- R.3318.—*I gotta get myself somebody to love* and *It made you happy* (Sam Lanin and his Famous Players). The former is as good a Charleston as I've heard; the latter is a perfectly played quick fox-trot.
- R.3319.—\*\**Blue skies* and \**In a little Spanish town* (waltz) (Sam Lanin and his Famous Players). *Blue Skies* is more rhythmic than the Brunswick version—the waltz is too quick.

- E.5762.—*The Riff Song* and *If* (both from "The Desert Song") (Ronnie Munro and his Orchestra).
- E.5763.—\*\**The Desert Song* (waltz) (Ronnie Munro and his Orchestra). A good waltz, in the style of some years back. *One alone* (Melody Sheiks).
- E.5764.—\**Only a rose* ("Vagabond King") and *Huguette* ("Vagabond King") (Ronnie Munro and his Orchestra). I like the singing of Scovell and Wheldon.
- E.5765.—*Song of the Vagabonds* ("Vagabond King") (Vincent Lopez and his Casa Lopez Orchestra) and *Since I found you* (Harry Reser's Jazz Pilots). I can't choose between this and the Brunswick.
- E.5768.—*You know I know* and *Where d'ya work-a, John?* (6/8 one-step) (Harry Reser's Jazz Pilots). I like this even better than the Brunswick.
- E.5760.—\**High, high, high up in the hills* (Bar Harbor Society Orchestra) and \*\**Hello! Swanee, hello!* (Mike Markel's Orchestra).
- E.5761.—\**I can't get over a girl like you* and \*\**Brown sugar* (Arkansaw Travellers). The latter is a Charleston.

## REGAL (2s. 6d.).

The two records by Jack Payne's band are excellent value. His is a band with a most decided style of its own.

- G.8823.—\*\**Picardy* and \*\**Perhaps you'll think of me* (waltz) (Jack Payne's Hotel Cecil Band).
- G.8824.—*For baby and me* and *In our love canoe* (waltz) (Jack Payne's Hotel Cecil Band).
- G.8825.—*Tell me you love me* and \**Susie's feller* (Raymond Dance Band).
- G.8828.—\**Talking to the moon* and *Chérie, I love you* (waltz) (Raymond Dance Band). The tempo of the waltz is not bad, but so dull.

## VOCALION (3s.).

I like Teddy Brown when he plays the Xylophone, but apart from that, I'm afraid I find his band rather dull. Not an inspiring set of records, except 9994.

- 9986.—\**Sing* ("Lady Luck") and *Since I found you* (Teddy Brown and his Café de Paris Band).
- 9987.—\**You're the one for me* and \*\**Ain't she sweet* (Teddy Brown and his Café de Paris Orchestra).
- 9994.—*The Riff Song* ("Desert Song") and *Paree* (6/8 Paso-doble) (Riverside Dance Band).

## ZONOPHONE (2s. 6d.).

What a big improvement there is in the playing of these records this month. They are played in a somewhat "straight style," with excellent results.

- 2903.—\**Caring for you* and \*\**Blue Skies* (Devonshire Restaurant Band). Smooth fox-trots.
- 2904.—\*\**You should see my Tootsie* and \**Pretty little thing* (Devonshire Restaurant Band).
- 2906.—*Because I love you* (waltz) and \**Somebody's lonely* (Bert Firman's Orchestra). The time in the waltz is good. The other is quick.
- 2907.—\*\**Ain't she sweet* and *Indian Butterfly* (Bert Firman's Orchestra). I prefer this to the Vocalion *Ain't she sweet*.
- 2908.—*Stampede* and *Brown Sugar* (Bert Firman's Orchestra).

## BOOK REVIEW.

SINGER'S FRENCH. By May Laird-Brown. (Dent's Modern Language Series, 5s. net).

This is an admirable little book which every student of singing should possess. The author has sifted the best French text-books on diction and phonetics with excellent results. The alphabet of the International Phonetic Association is used to indicate pronunciation, and Part II is devoted to an abridged grammar, sufficient for the study of the average repertoire. The course is arranged in lessons, for the convenience of teachers.



# TRADE WINDS AND IDLE ZEPHYRS

## Duties

Before you forget it please do three things. Send in a postcard with your voting for The Forum prizes, get on with your list of Best Tunes, for the March Competition, and, thirdly, order the Index to the present volume of THE GRAMOPHONE from your dealer or newsagent, or direct from the London office. Particulars of these three things will be found elsewhere in this number.

## Date of Publication

This is also a good time for you to consider whether you receive THE GRAMOPHONE every month reasonably early. It is published on the first day of the month in London, and is posted to subscribers on the previous day. If you have been worried by delays in the past, either take out an annual subscription from the London office, or write to us saying who supplies you, and we will try to arrange things better for the next volume. Considering the trouble that is taken to have the reviews up to date, it is ridiculous that you should not get THE GRAMOPHONE at least as soon as your dealer has the new month's records in stock.

## N.G.S. Orchestral Records

Quite a number of readers have gone so far as to register themselves as members of the National Gramophonic Society, but have not yet ventured to spend even 6s. on sampling one of the N.G.S. records. The Delius (one record), or the Mozart Symphony (two records), are admirable examples of what the N.G.S. can produce, and both these works are still in stock. But they are not the only ones. Write for the new illustrated book about the N.G.S.

## The Gramophone Exchange

The additional premises taken over by the Gramophone Exchange, at 121, Shaftesbury-avenue, close to Cambridge Circus, and within three minutes' walk of our London office, are worth an early visit. Audition cells are installed on the ground-floor and in the basement, and though the warren at 29, New Oxford Street is still unchanged, the spaciousness of the new Astra House seems to include the same intimate heterogeneous atmosphere which has always distinguished the Gramophone Exchange. We have many pleasant memories of our friends there since the earliest days of THE GRAMOPHONE and heartily wish them prosperity in their new quarters.

## Favourite Records

Whatever may be the firm favourites of the public as a whole, it is pretty clear that Tommy Atkins prefers sentimental and sacred music. One of our readers, Major A. H. Burne, R.A., gives the result of plebiscite voting on about 300 different records played to his men at Jubbulpore during the last three years, "ranging from classical to the lightest possible"; and these are the winners:—Old Folks at Home, The Sands of the Desert, The Rosary, The Trumpeter, Ave Maria (Bach-Gounod, which "has an irresistible and almost universal appeal to soldiers"), Hallelujah Chorus, Il Trovatore Selection, Abide with me (Liddle), Barcarolle (Tales of Hoffmann), Leave me not to pine alone (Pirates of Penzance), Land of Hope and Glory, Mary of Argyle, Minuet in G (Beethoven), Bonnie Leezie Lindsay, The Trumpet Shall Sound, Star of Bethlehem, Light Cavalry Overture, The Cradle of the Deep, O Star of Eve, and Gun Drill Quartette (humorous). The minority votes include such records as Siegfried's Funeral March, Unfinished Symphony, Melodies from Handel, Vatican Choir, Schubert's Serenade, Death and Transfiguration, and The Rich Man Drives By!

It will be interesting to see whether any of these survive in our Twenty Best Tunes competition.

## A Solecism

Thanks to those readers who drew attention to the substitution of "discount" for "premium" in Trade Winds last month—that terrible pitfall for the careless journalist. And he is a member of the Society for Pure English.

## Floreat! Florebit!

Among records of Community Singing must now be reckoned the Eton School Song, recorded by H.M.V., and shouted by the boys themselves. On the 4th of June it will be heard all over the world, wherever old Etonians are gathered together to dine in memory of George the Third's birthday. But why do we still wait for an authoritative record of the Eton Boating Song, that very lovely union of words and melody?

## Covent Garden

The Opera Season starts on May 2nd, and once more we shall have the privilege of publishing the criticisms of Mr. Herman Klein upon it. As all our readers have long known, Mr. Klein, an ex-President of the Critics Circle, holds a unique position as a critic and historian of opera in this country, which it is almost an impertinence on our part to allude to.

## Beethoven Symphonies

The Parlophone Company has issued a distinguished booklet on the Symphonies of Beethoven which we strongly advise every owner of records of the Symphonies, of whatever make, to secure. It is one of the outstanding contributions to the Centenary and an honour to the Company.

## Gramophone Lectures

Following Mr. W. R. Anderson's lecture on Elgar, another of our contributors, Mr. Peter Latham, is giving a talk about Chamber Music to the S.E. London R.M. Society on May 9th. Visitors are cordially welcomed, and should enquire for particulars from the Hon. Sec., 67, Gourock Road, Eltham, S.E. 9.

## To Hampstead Readers

We have a strong supporter in Drazin, who has opened a fine shop at 59, Heath Street, opposite Hampstead Tube Station.

## Books Received

Easily the most attractive looking book ever sent to THE GRAMOPHONE for review is *Old English Songs, Amorous, Festive and Divine*, "written out" by A. C. Harradine, photo-lithographed by Messrs. Henderson and Spalding, and published at 10s. 6d., by our neighbours Gerald Howe, Ltd., of Soho Square.

Another half-guinea book, which must be left for more leisurely notice hereafter is Dr. A. Eaglefield Hull's *Music, Classical, Romantic and Modern* (J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd.). It has the distinction of being the first book on music published in this country which refers to the records issued by the National Gramophonic Society, in an appendix of nearly fifty pages, giving details of all the gramophone records of composers mentioned in the book.

## Federation Activities

Dates to be noted—June 7th to 11th, the sixteenth British Music Industries Convention at Folkestone, and August 5th to 19th, the sixth Summer Course in Music Teaching at Oxford. The arrangements for both are such models of combining instruction and amusement or business and pleasure or hard work and holiday that they will be more popular this year than ever before. Particulars from the Federation of British Music Industries, 117-123, Great Portland Street, London, W. 1.

## Eileen Andjelkovich

This violinist, whose Aeol records have often been praised in THE GRAMOPHONE, has established a welcome precedent by sending invitations to her recital at the Aeolian Hall last Tuesday to the Editor, the London Editor, and all our reviewers separately in registered envelopes! The compliment was much appreciated.



## NATIONAL GRAMOPHONIC SOCIETY NOTES

(All communications should be addressed to The Secretary, N.G.S.,  
58, Frith Street, London, W.1.)

### The Orchestral Records

Thanks are due to all the members who took the trouble to write and say how much they are enjoying the orchestral records. Naturally, we at headquarters are satisfied by the success of what was an anxious undertaking; but it is extremely pleasant to hear from all sides that members are equally satisfied. There is one other thing which they can do. They can persuade their friends to pay a visit to Murdoch's Salons in Oxford Street at the earliest opportunity, and to hear all the records which the Society has to offer.

### Mr. Robin Legge

For the benefit of those who did not see Mr. Robin Legge's review of the orchestral records in the *Daily Telegraph* on April 9th, we print it entire:—

N.G.S.

"Significant progress is being made by this unique society by the publication of their first orchestral records, and if I were asked to adjudicate upon these and determine which is the best of a wonderful five I should be truly embarrassed. The chamber orchestra of the National Gramophonic Society give an ideal account of Mozart's Symphony in C, No. 22 (K.200) under the bâton of André Mangeot and the leadership of John Fry, the four movements of the delightful work being recorded on two 12in. discs. Another eighteenth century work is Corelli's 'Concerto for Christmas Night,' played in an edition which Frank Bridge has made. The slow movement of this lovely and little-known work is in itself an experience worth having and repeating many, many times. The other three works are modern: the 'Deux Danses' ('Danse Sacrée' and 'Danse Profane') of Claude Debussy, Delius's 'A Summer Night on the River,' and Peter Warlock's 'Serenade' for Strings, written in honour of Delius's 60th birthday. The solo pianist in the Debussy is Ethel Bartlett, a very accomplished young artist, and in each case the playing of the orchestra (conducted by John Barbirolli) seems to me to be faultless. But great care will have to be taken in the choice of needles, especially in a work so subtle and exquisite as the Delius. I shall look forward eagerly to more such records made under the ægis of a society so single-minded as this."

### Musical News and Herald

An even more enthusiastic notice of these records appeared in the *Musical News* for April 15th. This should be read by every member who has the slightest misgiving about any of the records.

### List of Records

The illustrated list of the Society's records, with an introduction by Compton Mackenzie, will be sent to every Member, but we shall be glad to send a dozen copies or so to anyone who feels willing to distribute them.

### The Next Work

It is not yet decided which of the three works suggested last month shall be chosen for recording. The voting of members was very even.

### The Ravel Quartet

Before starting for Italy, Mr. Mangeot was able to hear some of the test prints of the Ravel Quartet which the International String Quartet had made for us, and though one movement may have to be re-recorded, the rest are very satisfactory. The work is complete on seven sides, and the eighth has been filled by the first movement from Ravel's *Sonatine* for piano, played by Miss Kathleen Long.



## The National Gramophonic Society

was started three years ago by Compton Mackenzie under the auspices of THE GRAMOPHONE to do for recorded music what such organisations as the Medici Society have done for the printed word. By the voting of the members and with the help of an advisory committee of well-known musicians, a number of important works have been chosen and completely recorded by first-rate players.

N.G.S. Records hold their own in point of playing, recording and price with any gramophone records on the market.

### Limited Membership

Membership is strictly limited, thus adding to these unique records the distinction of rarity which will be as greatly appreciated by the discerning amateur as the possession of a piece of Wedgwood by the ardent collector.

### Forgotten Masterpieces

of Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart and Schubert are produced on these records. Works by the modern composers Elgar, Goossens and Vaughan Williams, with many other attractive short works, all unobtainable on any other record, are available to members.

### How to join the N.G.S.

The subscription to the N.G.S. is 2s. 6d., except to annual subscribers to THE GRAMOPHONE who are *ipso facto* members. Send for fullest particulars and register your name and address as a member.

Address your letter to—

The Secretary,

NATIONAL GRAMOPHONIC SOCIETY  
58, Frith Street, London, W.1. Telephone: Regent 1392



# ARMCHAIR PHONATICS

By P. WILSON

## The Gramophone in the Living Room (*continued*)

I HAVE obtained some interesting results recently in regard to the height of the horn in the room. My gramophone and electrical apparatus are installed in the drawing-room (near the wireless aerial), but I have installed a loud-speaker unit and horn in a corner of the dining-room. At first I was obliged to fix it fairly low down, but the results were not so satisfactory as I wished. I then removed the apparatus to another corner of the room in such a position that the horn touched the ceiling. This was better in many ways, but I came to the conclusion that there was too much room reverberation. So I lowered the whole thing until the centre of the horn was about 2 ft. from the ceiling. This gives definitely better results, though I am inclined to think that even now the horn is too high, and some day when my wife is complaisant again, I propose to lower it still more and risk disfiguring the walls in the process. The present arrangement is shown in the photograph, and I think I may claim with justice that it is neither unsightly nor in the way; and it certainly forms an amazingly efficient loud-speaker.

There is another point about this arrangement which is worthy of notice. The corner of the room which I chose was the one furthest from both the fireplace and the window. Unfortunately, it also happens to be the one close to the door, so I am rather restricted as regards height. Again and again I have found that a position not too near the fireplace is best for the gramophone even though that means that the motor is not kept quite so warm as I should like. And a position at the other end of the room from the window is also desirable. There are always peculiar air-currents near the window, and in any case the damping effect provided by the curtains is just what we want to stop reverberation when the sound issues from the other end of the room. If I had to choose between a corner near the fireplace and one near the window I should always choose the former. Never in any

circumstances would I choose to play the gramophone on a table or stool in the middle of the room; and if possible I should also avoid placing it at the middle of one of the walls, particularly one of the longer walls.

I find, too, as I explained in February, that I can considerably improve the reproduction by attending to the heating of the room. It is not necessary to instal any special heating apparatus or even to go to any great amount of trouble. When I am giving a party, or on other occasions when I want the reproduction to come off really well, my procedure is as follows. About an hour before the visitors

arrive I make up a large fire (or turn the gas fire full on) and open the window very slightly at the top. Half an hour or so later when the room has got thoroughly warm, I turn down the gas fire, or let the coal fire get low, close the window at the top and open it slightly at the bottom. Just before the visitors arrive I can then make up the fire again and close the window. By this means I can get the air at the ceiling warmer than that down below, which is the condition, as I explained in February, which I find most suitable for good reproduction. To the visitors, I suppose, there does not appear to be anything out of the ordinary with the condition of the room; it is quite comfortably warm\* and free from draughts, that is all.

By this and other means I have obtained results with fibre needles which have amazed even old hands at the game.

I mentioned earlier on that sound-boxes like to be kept warm, and this applies with even more force to fibre needles. I always find it advisable before playing the gramophone to warm the sound-box and the needles in front of the fire. About blood-heat seems to be the right temperature, so that the sound-box seems neither cold nor hot to the touch. Anything hotter than that is dangerous.

P. WILSON

\* P.S.—My wife says that after the visitors have started smoking the room becomes uncomfortably warm.





# CREDE EXPERTO

By OUR EXPERT COMMITTEE

SOUND-BOXES FOR ELECTRIC RECORDING—*continued.*

## Stylus-bars.

THE stylus-bars of the *Exhibition* and *Saturn* sound-boxes are of the shape shown in Fig. 1 (p. 473); those of the No. 2 (and No. 4) boxes are as in Fig. 2; whilst those of the *Prizma*phone and *Orchorsol* are as in Fig. 3. All are made of good material (for our purposes). Most of them, however, are better for a good deal of thinning down at the upper end B. This applies almost without exception to every stylus-bar we have seen on commercial sound-boxes, the reason possibly being that it is difficult in large scale production to make sure that the cross-section is less than 1 sq. mm. So small a cross-section makes the bar rather fragile, and we find, as the result of a good deal of experimenting, that it is desirable to harden and temper the upper end. We shall describe the process more fully later. It should be noted that mild steel (or soft iron) cannot be tempered directly. It is, therefore, necessary to harden it by injecting carbon, either by the agency of potassium ferro-cyanide, or by means of

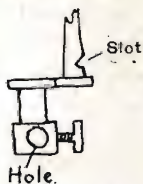


Fig. 6

one of the case-hardening materials, such as Kasenit. Only the upper end B is treated in this way. The lower part C is left soft.

Leaving aside for the moment the question of stylus-bar mounting, and confining our attention to the three types of sound-box previously mentioned, we find that the stylus-plate and needle-socket are very often far too massive. It is essential to reduce the mass of the stylus-bar as much as is consistent with a fair amount of rigidity. Too heavy a stylus-bar makes the reproduction dull and lacking in clarity, breadth of tone and volume. The stylus-plates and needle-sockets of the old U.S.A. Exhibition boxes were much lighter than those of the copies. We usually find it a definite gain to file off surplus material from the needle-socket, and even to bore holes through the end at right angles to the direction of the needle-screw. (See Fig. 6.) The needle-screw itself can also be lightened a good deal.

Brass answers well as the material for both plate and socket. In the former case it should be hard, even phosphor-bronze being not too hard. For the socket, however, a softer brass suffices. The grooves in the stylus-plate which fit on the knife-edges should be deep and wide. The angle of the groove can be as large as  $90^\circ$  with advantage. A little trouble devoted to making these grooves uniform and smooth will amply repay itself in the reproduction. A very fine square "needle-file" should be used to form them.

With regard to the method of attachment of the upper-arm to the stylus-plate, we are doubtful whether riveting or soldering is better. We have obtained good results with both. Probably a good deal depends on the other constituents of the stylus-bar. If they are such as to make the reproduction on the shrill side, soldering would be better; otherwise, riveting. We may also mention here that another method of reducing shrillness is to file a small triangular slot in the lower part of the upper arm C. (See Fig. 6.) We used that method at Jethou last September with an effect which quite startled the Editor and Mrs. Mackenzie. Another device for the same purpose is to bore small holes in the lower part of the upper arm C and to refill them with soft solder or silver solder. But the small triangular slot is usually more effective.

For the reason regarding even distribution of weight which we have given previously, we prefer that the stylus-bar should be mounted on knife-edges attached underneath the front rim and in the plane of the diaphragm. We are definitely opposed to the method of mounting the stylus-bar on the front of the front rim, such as is used in most of the large diaphragm sound-boxes. By that method the downward pressure is very far from being in line with the needle point, and there is in consequence a torque tending to press the needle into the side of the groove. This is probably one of the reasons why the Lifebelt is least effective with that type of sound-box. Now by the methods we adopt, very effective use can be made of the Lifebelt, especially the new pattern which we find much superior to the old for electric recording. The constant note records have shown us that the old pattern, unless strongly stiffened with springs, was uncomfortable at a frequency of about 200 cycles, which is well within the new recording range. The new pattern does not begin to vibrate dangerously until we get down to 60 cycles, and that is just outside the range of even electric records.



## THE NEW LIFEBELTS

AS we announced some time ago, the Lifebelt has now been modified so as to suit the conditions of electric recording. The old pattern was designed and the experiments with it were conducted just before electric recording was introduced. For old recordings it was universally acknowledged to effect an amazing improvement in the reproduction on many types of gramophone though on others it proved to be of less value. When electric recording appeared, however, it soon became apparent that something rather different was required. Many of the old instruments proved themselves to be incapable of dealing with the increased range of recording, and the Lifebelt would sometimes be set into violent vibration. It was but poor consolation to assure oneself, as was indeed the case, that damage would be caused to the records, Lifebelt or no Lifebelt. What was needed was some means of avoiding that damage, or of minimising it, and at the same time of improving the reproduction.

Experiment showed that the Lifebelt was much too flexible for electric records, and methods of stiffening it, such as flat springs, spring clips and tension controls were devised. The main cause of trouble was in the torsional flexibility which allowed the needle to be carried along with the groove and, on release, to shoot back. In the new form of Lifebelt this difficulty has been overcome by the insertion of two steel rods through the walls of the belt. In this way torsional flexibility is reduced to a minimum whilst lateral flexibility remains practically unimpaired.

The steel rods may be withdrawn without difficulty. This facilitates the fixing of the Lifebelt on the tone-arm in many cases. Sometimes it may be fitted directly, but for tone-arms with a Continental fitting the removal of the rods before fitting to the tone-arm is strongly advised. They can be re-inserted afterwards. In any case the Lifebelt should be fitted to the tone-arm before the sound-box is attached. It fits quite tightly even on the new H.M.V. arms, and on an arm with a large bore may need a little manipulation to get it right; this, of course, had much better be done whilst such delicate mechanism as the sound-box reposes in safety elsewhere.

It will probably be found best to fix the Lifebelt with the two rods parallel to the record, one at the front and one at the back. A vertical disposition can only be used on the largest gramophones. With very small instruments it may even be desirable to substitute rather stronger rods. Those supplied have been carefully chosen to suit the usual type of medium sized gramophones, so we hope that there will not be too big a raid on ladies' knitting needles.

Some remarks on the new Lifebelt by the Expert Committee will be found on another page. To these we may perhaps add that the Rev. L. D. Griffith who, though originally responsible for the Lifebelt, has had no direct part in the present modification, reports that he has found the sample sent to him distinctly superior to the old model for electric recordings. He still finds it an advantage to use a pair of spring clips and he is inclined to favour a narrower band. But in this he is not supported by the Expert Committee, individual members of which have reported, quite independently, that they have found the broad band, as supplied, to answer best provided that the Lifebelt is not pushed too far on the tone-arm, and the position of the ring on the belt is adjusted carefully. They add that probably the best adjustment will vary with different sound-boxes, but that as a rule it will be found advisable to keep the ring pressed up towards the tone-arm end of the belt.

With regard to weight on the record, some revision of ideas seems to be necessary and the Expert Committee will have some interesting disclosures in their next article, where an arresting explanation of the effect is given. It seems clear that during the past few years, there has been a tendency to fly from the Scylla of too much weight to the Charybdis of too little. The first Lifebelt showed the importance of careful adjustment of the pressure on the record, and with electric records and the new Lifebelt the adjustment is, if anything, more important than ever. It appears that the best weight to use depends primarily on the type of sound-box but also to some degree on the loudness of the record and the type of needle. But the adjustment varies slightly even with sound-boxes of the same type. The rule is: the stiffer the stylus-mounting, or the louder the record or needle, the greater the weight has to be. Less than 4 ounces is not to be recommended, and often this may be increased with advantage to even  $4\frac{1}{2}$  or 5 ounces. The W.G.N. and W.S.A. Weight Adjusters will permit of much less weight than this being used, and care should be taken not to screw the weights too far on the rod.

### PRICE LIST.

*Lifebelt* :—Continental fitting, 5s. ; H.M.V., 6s. ; Columbia, 6s. 6d. ; post free.

*W.G.N. Weight Adjuster* (for goose neck or new H.M.V. tone-arms).—7s. 6d. Postage 3d.

*W.S.A. Weight Adjusters* (for straight, e.g., Columbia, tone-arms).—10s. Postage 3d.

GRAMOPHONE PUBLICATIONS LTD., 58, FRITH STREET, W. 1.



## CORRESPONDENCE

*De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum.*

[All letters and manuscripts should be written on one side only of the paper and should be addressed to the Editor, The Gramophone, 58, Frith Street, London, W.1. The writer's full name and address must be given. A stamped envelope must be enclosed if an answer or the return of the manuscript is desired. The Editor wishes to emphasise the obvious fact that the publication of letters does not imply his agreement with the views expressed by correspondents.]

## LECTURES WITH THE GRAMOPHONE.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—You suggest that some Recording Company should enlist the co-operation of Mr. Edwin Evans to lecture to gramophonists with illustrations from gramophone records (April, p. 469). May I, from a considerable experience of lecturing upon music state my conviction that the gramophone is *essentially* an instrument for one's home, where alone intimate study of a record—with repetition, etc.—is possible. Indeed, is not this the gramophone's greatest virtue? In a hall the constant changing of records and needles and the winding up are disconcerting, and "let an audience down," especially in the case of long works. During the Beethoven Celebrations I used two gramophones and duplicate sets of records, but even then there had to be a certain amount of moving about and manipulation. An audience would far rather hear me play Beethoven badly than Lamond play him superlatively on a record. (There you have the British sporting instinct. We like to see a horse go at a fence even if he comes down!) But at home they would prefer the record.

However, lecturers would do well to learn the technique of using the gramophone in public. Many of them approach it as if it were a vicious dog; others address their audiences with their heads stuffed down the horn, and, generally, an uneasy air invests the proceedings.

Yours truly,

"DISCOBOLOS."

P.S.—What a good joke "British Taxpayer's" letter was!

["Well was this place called Stony Stratford: for I was never so bitten of fleas in my life." The *non-sequitur* and airy irrelevance of Discobolos's remarks are so charming that we leave it to some of those who hear his lectures to refute him by his own example, if they can pierce his pseudonym.—Ed.)

## ELECTRICAL REPRODUCERS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Wilson has thought it worth while to reply in his Armchair Phonatics to my letter on electrical reproducers. I am afraid he and I will never agree. I have that "pernickety" musical taste which he seems to think ought to be satisfied with a loud speaker giving a range up to 10,000 vibrations a second. I refuse to be satisfied with 10,000, if normally my ear can give me pleasure in overtones beyond that range.

I would point out, however, if a light diaphragm is all that is required to give us the 10,000, that there is no necessity for Mr. Wilson to wait the development of cellulose acetate—there are already on the market a number of very light large diaphragms of that material, which could quite readily be converted from gramophone to loud speaker use. I think, however, that he will find that there are "lag" difficulties in all large diaphragms no matter how light they may be or how large the power available. This I again venture to express as a law of nature. There are others, e.g., no mechanical reproduction can equal the original. This last is the salvation of Art and the artist, and there are some of us that are glad of it.

May I say how glad I should be to share in that illusion of sitting in the dress circle which seems to be so easy to Mr. Wilson.

Yours faithfully,

Ashtead.

C. BALMAIN.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Balmain in his letter on page 391 of your February issue criticises adversely a "large and heavy" diaphragm as a reproducer, as against a small and light diaphragm. His criticism, as I understand it, is that the mass of such a diaphragm prevents it vibrating fully at the higher frequencies—in other words

—that its motion is "inertia-controlled." This, however, is precisely what is intended with such a design. The combination of the laws governing inertia-control, and sound emission at varying frequency result in uniform response over the musical scale, provided the amplifier used with such a loud speaker is correctly designed. Mr. Balmain might be interested to refer to the Journal of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers for September, 1925, page 982, where the conditions governing the action of an inertia-controlled loud speaker are clearly stated.

Rugby.

Yours faithfully,

R. C. CLINKER.

## WAGNER.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Perhaps some of your readers will be interested in this brief note on a small batch of Wagner records that the Polydor Company have been kind enough to send me from Germany.

On 72979 Frida Leider gives an excellent rendering of two of the songs, *Der Engel* and *Im Treibhaus*, to an orchestral accompaniment I can thoroughly recommend this version of two numbers that will not be found in any of my lists. *Im Treibhaus* is built out of the material that afterwards went to the making of the Introduction to Act III of *Tristan*, and this record does much to console us for the lack of an adequate version of the introduction.

A record of the *Bridal March* from *Lohengrin* (66453) is incomplete and not sufficiently remarkable in other ways to compensate for this deficiency. The remaining discs are all of the more familiar orchestral excerpts. They are good, but not good enough to displace any of my former recommendations, the brass being harsh at times and the *ensemble* lacking weight (especially in the bass). But admirers of Polydor will find much to enjoy in the *Prelude* to Act I of *Parsifal*, which occupies both sides of 66478 and one side of 66479. The odd side holds the *Finale* of Act III (without the voices), another excerpt that is absent from my previous lists. The *Good Friday Music* (66480) is also good, though again the voices are lacking. Of the remainder, perhaps *Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine* (*Götterdämmerung*), complete on the two sides of 66475, is the best.

London.

Yours sincerely,

PETER LATHAM.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I enclose some notes on Mr. Latham's February Wagner article.

*Fliegende Holländer.*

D.G.A. had an excellent (though somewhat cut) disc of the Erik-Senta duet in Act II., with Erik's Dream on the other side. F. X. Battisti and Marga Burckhardt, M.044115-6. Act I., duet between Holländer and Daland. Polydor 65632, Schorr and Helgers.

*Tannhäuser.*

There is a good deal to be said for the Polydor *Bacchanale* (Schillings 66124). Though pre-electric and lacking the voices, the orchestra is very fine, and it is quite complete and yet has only one turn over.

There is a "complete" Act II., done by the German Odeon Co. (the finale is cut). Orchestra and chorus are thin, but it is the only quarter where one can get the complete prelude to Act II., and it is still useful for filling in such places as "the brief third scene," the Landgrave's address and the choric piece before *Blick' ich umher*, Biterolf and the Landgrave's intervention. It follows the Dresden text.

*Lohengrin.*

D.G.A. had a good disc of Elsa's Entrance and Dream (Act I., scene 2). Knüpfer, van Endert, and chorus, double sided. M.044220-1.

There is a Fonotipia disc of the Ortrud-Elsa duet (Italian) in Act II., which is still worth having (although eloquent) and has a nice orchestra. Parsi-Pettinella and Pasini-Vitale. 74147-8.

There is a complete Bride Chamber Scene done by the German Odeon Co., of which the last disc is still worth having as one side contains a slightly cut, but adequate version of the dialogue and melodrama from after *Hochstes Vertrauen* to the end of the scene. With regard to the H.M.V. otherwise admirable record of the Introduction to Act III. and Bridal Chorus, I do think it is a pity that the transitional bars leading to the chorus should have been cut off the end of the Introduction in order to enable that side to finish with a full close. This stupid and indefensible practice was a general curse in the early days of the gramophone—Columbia



even applied it to the first sections of the *Freischütz* and *Tannhäuser* overtures, and every now and then it crops up still when a full close stultifies the trend of the music. I wish THE GRAMOPHONE would pillory it every time; no other means could so effectually stamp it out and let the composer's purpose appear.

#### Rheingold.

H.M.V. used to have a very fine Erda's Warning by Schumann-Heink; I fancy it is still in the Victor catalogue (88092).

D.G.A. had a good disc of the colloquy with the Giants (*Auftritt der Riesen*). Krassa, Koerfer, Knüpfer, 044243-4. And also a double disc of H. Hensel with Loge's two monologues. 042259-60.

The very grand *Abendlich strahlt*, by Van Rooy, is still in the Historic Section, H.M.V., D.809, and most desirable in spite of the piano in the orchestra. (Every disc that Van Rooy ever did ought to be issued again; they are still adequate and desirable recordings, especially if "the grindstone accompaniment" could be smoothed out by modern methods.)

#### Walküre.

D.G.A. had two double discs running from the entrance of Hunding to the end of Siegmund's story of the fight and the dead woman just before Hunding goes to bed. Knüpfer, Kraus, and Marie Knüpfer-Egli. 044168-042268, 044170-71.

There is a better *Männer Sippe* in Polydor than Haifgen Dinkela's, don't you think? I mean Lotte Lehmann's. 72906.

As to Act II., the German Odeon Company has a disc with most of Wotan's *Erzählung* that is cut out from the H.M.V. Wotan warns Brunnhilde not to disobey. Carl Braun, XX.B.6148.

Polydor has a much fuller double-sided *Todverkündigung*, by Leider and Soot (729876) than the H.M.V. Austral-Davies (D.687), and D.G.A. had a very fine one by Melanie Kurt and Jacques Urlus.

Act III.—A year or two ago, in the H.M.V. Opera Book, a record was announced (D.946) containing the end of Act II. and the beginning of Act III—"The assembling of the Valkyries," with voices. When ordered a reply came "Cancelled, owing to a mishap to the matrix." Would it not be a good thing to press for the re-recording of so much desirable matter.

Does not Polydor 72978—Leider, *War es so schmachlich*—cover some of the early part of the third scene?

D.G.A. had a disc by Margaret Arndt-Ober of Fricka's longest speech in Act II., with Erda's Warning on the reverse. 043231-0.

#### Siegfried.

Victor used to have an admirable celebrity record of Mime's opening soliloquy by Reiss, which may possibly be still available. 74235.

D.G.A. had a disc with the main part of the ensuing conversation between Mime and Siegfried, by Kraus and Lieban, in which Lieban's profoundly studied characterisation more than compensated for Kraus's harsh voice. 044218-9.

Kraus and Henke, Polydor 10in., 61844. *Wir sind zur Stelle (Doch Leisse mich das)*.

Polydor at present has a disc by these two of *Mime's Treachery* in Act II. (65462) which seems to me more desirable than H.M.V., D.700, both because it goes right on to *Mime's Discomfiture and Death* and because of Liebau's Mime. On the latter account the above two records have authority and historical value, for Wagner saw and approved Liebau in this part in his youth (see Angelo Neumann's "Recollections of Wagner").

Victor used to have an amazing 10in. record by Reiss and Görzit of the quarrel of Alberich and Mime while Siegfried is in the cave. It is one of the high-water marks of the gramophone, and ought to be re-issued.

In Act III. the German Parlophon Co. do a disc containing most of the dialogue between Erda and Wotan, beginning where H.M.V., Wotan invokes Erda, leaves off (Theodore Latterman and Otilie Metzger-Lattermann (P.386). Otilie is good, and Theodore is much as he is in his König Marke monologue in Act II. of *Tristan* on Polydor.

With regard to H.M.V., D.B.441, *Siegfried ascends the rock*, it was a stupid thing to cut off the *Verwändlungs-musik* some twenty bars before the end of the section, and I should like to see the Gramophone Co. censured for it—for there is enough room left empty on the disc to have held it.

There was a D.G.A. disc by Hensel of Siegfried's *Selige Oede* when he reaches the rock. Double-sided 042292-3.

#### Götterdämmerung.

D.G.A. had a disc (044224-5) of Siegfried's *Erzählung* in Act III. right up to the murder, with all the parts (including the Vassals') sung, the solo being by Kraus. In endorsing Mr. Latham's

emphatic request for the Rhinemaidens' Song with voices, there seems no reason why it should not go on to their colloquy with Siegfried, and then Siegfried's *Erzählung* with ensemble as described above. This would make a complete Act III., scene 1, and should be as popular as the equivalent, almost complete Act III., scene 1, of *Die Meistersinger*, for it is full of Wagner's finest things.

#### Tristan und Isolde.

Act II.—The Victor Co. had a celebrity record by Gadski—*Dein Werk*—which filled much of the space between the two sides of H.M.V., D.736, which may be still available (88165).

With reference to D.737, the Gramophone Co. have rarely done anything so inartistic as the cutting the recording short on the last fortissimo note of the voices; it gives them the effect of a bark, and there is plenty of room on the record for the few bars of orchestra to the end of the section at the double bar. It would be a safe rule to urge that in such a case the record should always go on to the double bar; and it would always work well in making a join up possible if the succeeding matter were recorded on some other occasion.

Act III. There is a complete recording of the Prelude (with the shepherd's tune) filling both sides of a 12in. record, done by the German Parlophon Co. It is one of their best orchestral records. P.1022.

There is a Vox record by Fritz Vogelstrom of part of Tristan's first soliloquy while the shepherd is still playing. On the other side is *Wohin nun Tristan scheidet, Muss ich dich so verstehn*. \*03157.

#### Parsifal.

Act II. A recording of the Prelude to this Act is much to be desired.

*Flower Maidens*.—The Parlophon version is highly acceptable. I have wondered that no one has drawn attention to the remarkable performance of Gema Guszalewicz as Kundry on the third record. Her voice's first entrance is a vivid surprise, giving that sense of immediacy which is so rarely within the gramophone's means, and seeming like a warm enveloping presence in a scented atmosphere. If this artist often sings so she ought to take one of the highest places as a Wagner singer; it is to be hoped that Parlophon will employ her again and more.

D.G.A. has still, I believe, a record beginning after the end of *Kundry's Curse* (044261-2) and going to the end of the Act, sung by Erna Damera and Rudolph Berger, but it is laboured and heavy.

Act III. *Good Friday Music*.—H.M.V. until a year or two ago had a good complete version of this with voices by Knüpfer and Jadlowker, and the Victor catalogue has an adequate one by Jörn and Müller. 55061, double-sided.

Until the issue of the *Parsifal* album H.M.V. listed (on the back of Part III. of the Prelude) the *Verwändlungs Musik* (i.e., Titirel's *Funeral March*), conducted by Alfred Hertz.

And in the Spanish H.M.V. catalogue until lately there was a choral record of the Knights' Chorus that follows this (on the other side is *Nehmet von brot* from Act I.). 063044, double-sided.

D.G.A. had a very fine record beginning part way through this chorus, and going on right to the end of Amfortas' death-speech, superbly sung by Richard Breitenfeld. *Totenfeier*, 042433-4.

#### Faust Overture.

65955, 65956 (three sides), Polydor. Philharmonic Orchestra, Berlin; conductor, Bruno Walter. None of this batch of Walter's recordings seem to come off completely; they seem to hesitate and labour, but this one is an adequate performance, all the same, and worth having until someone does an electric one.

#### Lieder.

Olzewska's *Träume* and *Schmerzen* are first rate. 72778 Polydor. Fifteen years ago H.M.V. listed a record of two of Wagner's early French songs—*Dors, mon enfant* (a delicious lullaby) and *Attente*, beautifully sung by Susan Strong. It should be worth re-issuing, though the accompaniment is not up to the singing. 03128.

#### Kaisermarsch.

Only its ill-fated title can have kept this from being as popular as the *Tannhäuser March*. There are two recordings of it, both adequate; one by Polydor, complete on three sides, and one with all the best of it on two sides, issued by the German Odeon Co. XX.B.6021. (P.S.—I find the Polydor complete recording has been withdrawn and only a cut version on one side remains—15743.)

In the above list all the records are 12in., save for one exception noted. D.G.A. is Deutsches Grammophon Aktiengesellschaft, Polydor's ancestor. I take it that still, as some three years ago,



it has a German catalogue whose records cannot enter England on account of its war-time schism with the English parent Gramophone Company, so perhaps it is tantalising of me to refer to them. But they *may* still be obtainable if H.M.V.'s consent can be obtained, which is why I mention them.

GORDON BOTTOMLEY.

Mr. Latham writes:—

"Mr. Gordon Bottomley's letter contains much useful information about records by D. G. A., Odeon, and Polydor, which I have not heard, and I am glad that you are proposing to print it in full. Generally speaking, I agree with what he says wherever my limited knowledge entitles me to hold an opinion. I do not think, however, that the double-bar is always a good place to end a record (*vide* his remarks on *Tristan*, H.M.V., D.737). There are, for instance, two double bars within twenty bars of the point where the voices leave off at the end of the Love Scene, but neither of these exactly marks a good stopping place. On the other hand, I have no defence to offer for what H.M.V. have actually done. The only sensible course would be for each of the recording companies to have musical experts who would decide each of these difficult cases on its merits—and even then they would not satisfy everyone.—P. L."

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Herewith I am sending you my belated contribution to the Wagnerian Record Library, and I hope that I am not making any useless repetitions. The records are taken from the German H.M.V. list (marked G.), the "Gramola" (Gr.), and the few single-sided discs are H.M.V. special pressings. Incidentally, each side of the Gramola records can be obtained separately as a special pressing. The Gramola Co. is the Czech H.M.V.

#### Das Rheingold.

Scene 4.—*Alberich's Curse*, by Desider Zador (4-42213—S.P.)

Scene 4.—*Donnersruf, Schwüres Gedunst* (044217—Gr.) and *Schlussgesang der Rheintöchter* (044216—Gr.). Side 1 by F. Koerfer, Kurt Sommer, and side 2 with Adelaide Andrejewa, Ida von Scheele-Müller and Margarethe A-Ober.

#### Walküre.

Act III.—*Nicht weise bin ich*, by Margarete Matzenauer (043129—S.P.).

#### Siegfried.

Act I.—*Zwangvolle Plage* (4-42532—Gr.) and *Der ist nun der Liebe* (4-42533—Gr.), by Julius Lieban.

Act II.—*Heiss ward mir*, by Heinrich Knotte (042298—Gr.) and *Nun Sing!* by Knotte and Marie Dietrich (044182—Gr.). Knotte has also done, to my mind, quite the best *Waldweben* I have heard (042294-95—Gr.).

#### Die Götterdämmerung.

Act I.—*Bluhenden Leben*, by Carl Burrian and Friedrich Plaschke (2-44319—S.P.), or by Erich Schmedes and Leopold Demuth (3-44064—S.P.).

Act II.—*Brünnhilde, du hehrste Frau*, by Cornelius Brongsgeest and chorus (U.X.51413—Odeon); *Helle Wehr!* by Johanna Galski (Victor—S.P.).

Act III.—*Rhinemaiden's Scene*, by Adelaide Andrejewa, Ida von Scheele-Müller, and Margarethe Arndt-Ober (2-44414—S.P.).

#### Tristan und Isolde.

Act I.—*Westwärts schweift der Blick*, by Karl Jörn (4-42499—S.P.).

Act II.—*Doch unsere Liebe* (Love Duet), by Erna Denera and Ernst Kraus (044278—S.P.). This comes between Parts 3 and 4 of the H.M.V. supplement.

#### Parsifal.

Act I.—*O wundervolle heilige Speer! und Titurel, der fromme Held*, by Michael Bohnen (R.X.X.76461—Odeon).

Act I.—*Die wusste Schuf er sich*, by Michael Bohnen (042451—S.P.). A continuation of the second side of the previous record.

Act I.—*Den sundigen Welten* (Chorus) (044511—G.) and *Meine Sohn, Amfortas* (044248—G.), by Cornelius Brongsgeest and Rudolf Krusa.

Act I.—*Vom Bade kehrt der König heim* (4-42555—Gr.) and *Nun achte wohl* (4-42556—Gr.), by Paul Knüpfer.

Act III.—*Wir geleiten ihn heut* (042433—G.) and *Tod. Sterben* (042434—G.), by Richard Breitenfeld. This includes and adds to *Mein Vater* by Whitehill.

My only present suggestion for more Wagner is as much of the second act of *Walküre* as possible. Why not the Siegmund-Sieglinde duets?

London, N.W. 3.

Yours faithfully,

Fosc.

[In "Fosc's" letter records already mentioned by Mr. Gordon Bottomley have been omitted. To any reader who has difficulty in obtaining any of these records we shall be pleased to send the address of a likely supplier. No further letters on the subject of omissions from Mr. Latham's Wagner articles will be very welcome—at any rate for some months.—Ed.]

#### PROPAGANDA.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I have successfully accomplished what I have long desired to do, viz., give a public gramophone recital. I demonstrated to a crowded audience of about 250 the wonders of modern gramophony (my machine is new H.M.V., model 171) and incidentally raised over £6 for church funds by charging sixpence admission. I aimed at as wide a variety as possible of best music. Among the artists were Melba, Galli-Curci, Hempel, Butt, Caruso, Elwes, Chaliapin, Stracciari, Allin, Kreisler, Casals, Amadio, duets by Hislop and Granforte, Schumann, and Schlusnus, with *Siegfried's Journey*, *Hallelujah* and *Soldiers' Chorus*. The audience, which included most of the prominent musicians of our small town, was very appreciative, and at the conclusion the conductor of the Choral Society, in proposing a vote of thanks, was very eulogistic of the whole programme, and expressed his amazement at the wonderful reproduction of the *Hallelujah Chorus*. I have sent this letter to show what can be done in the way of interesting people in the best music, to popularise the gramophone, and so gain potential readers for "our" paper.

Sincerely yours,

J. C. HORRELL.

#### EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

[Apologies are herewith offered to the correspondents concerned if the blue pencil has foreshortened the perspective of their views. They have themselves partly to blame.—LONDON ED.]

#### MUSIC DEALERS AND RECORDS.

I noticed in a recent issue of our popular magazine that it was mentioned that Murdoch's Music Stores in London were giving demonstrations in their audition room every month of new gramophone records, for which tickets were issued to prospective buyers, . . . If our dealers in the provinces were to give a demonstration monthly of the principal new records, I am sure they would find a greater number of persons purchasing records which they would not otherwise do. This could easily be done by some of our music dealers who have the accommodation, and would doubtless bring in good returns. I remember Murdoch's, of Chatham, giving a demonstration nearly twenty years ago; I attended this, although not then an enthusiast at that time, and never forgot hearing some of the best records of that time. . . .—H. H. SANFORD, Chatham.

#### N.G.S. AND THE MODERNS.

I shall be glad to follow the lead of the founder of the N.G.S., and buy whatever he recommends. But it seems to me that this is a different society from the one I thought I was joining. It is as if the Early English Text Society were including works by H. D. Lawrence and Ezra Pound in their annual publications. With much of Haydn still to be done, we could wait with patience for Vaughan Williams and Warlock. And please do not give us recordings that require new and expensive instruments. The hundred thousand ordinary people who have bought ordinary gramophones are not going to scrap them and buy forty-guinea models to play new records—they will simply cease to buy any more.—ROBERT STEELE, London.

#### AN ADVISORY BOARD?

Can we visualise a Central Recording Committee who, in effect, would put out work to the various recording organisations in accordance with their equipment and resources? This would mean that A, who have been accustomed to painting on a large canvas, would do large and imposing works, B would be allocated works of somewhat finer calibre or appertaining to certain aspects



of music, while C would fill still another rôle, and might, for instance, specialise in bands and so forth.

Of course, these remarks presuppose rather an Utopian state of things, and one at the same time rather official and stereotyped; but, assuming that one identical method of recording was used by all companies, it does not seem possible that if they issued by some Puckish freak, the same work in the same month, that one would be so much better than the others that we should all buy it, principally by reason of the name or names of the artists or organisation responsible. A "live-wire" recording manager *may* have an inkling of what the opposition is doing or going to do and even exercise an intelligent anticipation, but that cannot operate except in a few instances; and although we often cavil at the number of repetitions (often of things we could do without), that pour out in a continuous stream, how great a restraint do we often exhibit when not even a poor, white-faced advance guard of the force of things unrecorded, ever succeeds in scrambling to safety, through the help of *any* recording company?

The prevailing spirit is not only one of emulation, but of attempted domination, and our Central Recording Committee, between the devil of dividends and the deep sea of jealousy, would likely have a thorny path; but, taking such a system as the National Gramophonic Society as a guide, it does seem that something might be done in the way of more co-ordination.—S. F. D. HOWARTH, Brixton.

#### DUPLICATION.

The really economical records are those which bear constant repetition, and if I were asked to name the cheapest set of records issued this year, I should plump unhesitatingly for the Chopin *Preludes* by Cortot, because they contain charming, unhackneyed music, with such an infinite variety of themes that one can scarcely imagine them ever becoming stale. If the companies are going to pursue their present policy of electrifying all the "old favourites," do they imagine that we who have helped to support them for the last ten or fifteen years are going to run out into the rain to buy records, however improved, of music that we already know absolutely by heart, let alone two versions of it. Unless they *do* think this it would appear that they are content for the present to cater for new comers to the gramophone, and to split their sales amongst even that limited clientèle.—LIONEL GILMAN, Purley.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

[Each comment or question should be written clearly on a separate slip of paper and addressed to THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Friith Street, W.1, as early as possible in the month. Full name and address must in all cases be given for reference.]

(497) **Gramophone Societies' Reports.**—A page, or even half, might usefully be devoted to a resumé of the activities of the various societies, collated from information and programmes supplied, and which would be calculated to keep them in touch with one another through your columns.—S. F. D. H., Brixton.

The first pages I turn to in your journal are gramophone societies' reports. I want to know what these societies are doing, what kind of concerts they give at their members' and public demonstrations, and whether they are progressing... Is there nothing else which can be sacrificed in place of such interesting matter which only occupies two or three pages of your valuable journal.—H. W., Bradford.

[Once before we tried a survey of the G.S. reports, but it provoked an outcry from the secretaries. However, if they will send in their reports as before we will try again. Up-to-date notes on proceedings should reach the London Office on May 14th.—ED.]

(498) **Long Works on Too Many Discs** (see the Forum, February, page 438).—"Till Eulenspiegel" could not be got on to one disc, the rough time for performance being fifteen or sixteen minutes. Recent articles by P. Wilson and others have shown that records cannot be run any slower or nearer the centre without risk of faulty recording—e.g., the second side of the Love Duet from "Die Walküre" (H.M.V.) which develops a very harsh tone by going too near the centre. Whatever we do we mustn't encourage "cuts" again, now that they are dying out.—M. G. A. H., Catterick Camp.

(499) **Record Labels.**—The speed at which records should be played should be plainly printed on every label; also the opus number and date of composition or at least the dates of birth and death of the composer. I should also like to see the date of recording, but there are perhaps trade reasons against this—which is a pity.—G. L. O. G., Haifa, Palestine.

(500) **Unrecorded Sphärenklänge** (see January, page 347).—I don't know whether "Ultava" was your correspondent's mistake for "Vltava," or the printer's but is he really unaware that "Vltava" and "Moldau" are one and the same?—N. S., Liverpool.

(501) **Harp Records.**—Kindly let me know if there is a really good harp record in existence. I do not mean an adapted or transposed song, or anything fantastic, but a genuine piece of harp music well played and recorded and with the minimum of scratch.—J. S. H., Glasgow.

(502) **Records Wanted.**—Any electrical recordings of decent melodies or accompanied songs in which only the ukulele, banjo, or the concertina is used.—W. H. A., London, S.E. 5.

(503) **Suggestions for Recording.**—I have often wondered why no record has yet been produced of Beethoven's Septette, Op. 20, for violin, viola, horn, clarinet, bassoon, cello and double bass. It seems to me that this combination of instruments is peculiarly well adapted for recording purposes.—J. A. H., Limerick.

(504) **Best Versions Wanted.**—(a) "Londonderry Air" (violin), (b) "Solveig's Song."—N. de S., Kimberley, S. Africa.

(505) **Robert Parker.**—I am wondering when our leading companies will realise that they have with them now a baritone who is surely one of the greatest artists of the time. I refer to Robert Parker, the American Singer. No one who has heard him in the "Ring," "Tosca," "Pagliacci," or the "Mastersingers" can have failed to be thrilled by his glorious voice and wonderful artistry.—L. H., West Kirby.

## ANSWERS TO QUERIES

[Answers must be written on separate slips and should be forwarded to THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Friith Street, London, W.1, as early in the month as possible.]

(492) **Best Records Wanted.**—(a) Martinelli: "Ideale" and "Mattinata," H.M.V., D.A.332; "La donna è mobile" and "E lucevan," H.M.V., D.A.325. (b) Titta Ruffo: Prologue from "Pagliacci," H.M.V., D.B.464; "Eri tu" and "O de'verd' anni," H.M.V., D.B.398. (c) Mischa Elman: Chopin "Nocturnes," H.M.V., D.B.234; "Kol Nidrei" and "Eili Eili," H.M.V., D.B.233. (d) Jan Kubelik: "Air for G String," H.M.V. 3-7966, s.s.; "Pierrot Serenade" and "Capriccio," H.M.V., D.B.673.—T. A. M., London, W. 2.

(495) **Best Records Wanted.**—(a) Martinelli (see 492): (c) De' Muro: "Ah che la morte" and "Deserto sulla terra," H.M.V., D.B.664; "Esultate" and "Ora è per sempre addio," H.M.V., D.B.559. (d) Journet: "La Marseillaise" and "Deux Grenadiers," H.M.V., D.B.311; "Je viens célébrer" and "Qual volontà trascorrere," H.M.V., D.M.126. (f) de Gogorza: "O Song Divine" and "Lost Chord," H.M.V., D.B.594; "La Paloma" and "La Golondrina," H.M.V., D.A.782.—T. A. M., London, W. 2.

(a) "Aida" duet with Ponselle, H.M.V., D.A.809; "Guglielmo Tell," trio with de Luca and Mardones, H.M.V., D.K.120, and his "Carmen" excerpts. (c) "Otello" excerpts. (d) All are superb. The best of the older lot is, I think, "Ella giammai m'amò," H.M.V., D.K.127. Of his recent recordings his "Nerone" excerpt, H.M.V. 733, is supreme. (e) Ruffo: "Otello" duet with Caruso, H.M.V., D.K.114; "Fin ch' han dal vino," H.M.V., D.A.3571. (f) Serenades from "Damnation de Faust" and "Don Giovanni," H.M.V., D.B.184.—A. M. G. B., Edinburgh.

(496) **Best Versions Wanted.**—(a) "Largo al Factotum" and (b) "Cortigiani, vil razza dannata," Stracciari, Col. 7352, probably his finest record in the Columbia catalogue. (b) Jewel Song from "Faust," Melba, H.M.V., D.B.361. (d) Micaela's Air from "Carmen," Tetrizzini, H.M.V., D.B.703.—T. A. M., London, W. 2. (a) Amato, H.M.V., D.B.156, or Stracciari. (b) Formichi, Col. L.1578, or Stracciari. (c) Farrar, H.M.V., D.B.243. (d) Alda, H.M.V., D.B.155.—A. M. G. B., Edinburgh.



# List of Gramophone Societies

- Accrington and District Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: J. B. Barnes, 15, Lister Street, Accrington.
- Agricola Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: E. U. Brockway, Office of Commissioners of Crown Lands, 1, Whitehall, S.W.1.
- Beethoven Gramophone Study Circle.**—*Hon. Sec.*: S. E. Willetts, 175, Cannock Road, Chads Moor, Cannock, Staffs.
- Birmingham Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: C. Summerfield, Board Room, Ebenezer Chapel, Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham.
- Blackburn and District Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: T. C. Egan, 45, Oozehead Lane, Blackburn.
- Blackpool Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: F. Leather, "Avon-wold," Hemingway, S.S., Blackpool.
- Blackpool Recorded Music Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: Coun. H. Burrows, West Thorn, Poulton-le-Fylde.
- Bradford Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: Mrs. H. Watson, 57, Aireville Road, Bradford.
- Bristol Gramophone and Phonograph Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: W. H. Stone, "Parkside," Howard Road, Westbury Park, Bristol.
- Brixton Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: J. T. Fisher, 28a, Field-house Road, Emmanuel Road, Balham, S.W.12.
- Burnley Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: H. Harrison, 7, Bramble Street, Burnley.
- Cambridge University Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: L. B. Neel, Caius College, Cambridge.
- Cannock Chase Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: S. E. Willetts, 175, Cannock Road, Chads Moor, Cannock, Staffs.
- Canterbury and District Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: G. S. Steddy, 53, St. Augustine's Road, Canterbury.
- Cardiff and District Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: Evan G. Jones, 26, Enid Street, Cardiff.
- Central London Gramophone Society.**—*Headquarters*: 38a, St. George's Road, Victoria, S.W. 1.
- City of Leeds Gramophone and Phonograph Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: E. T. S. Atkinson, 13, Bishopsgate Street, Leeds.
- City of London Phonograph Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: J. T. Wilkins, 14, Burns Road, London, S.W. 11.
- Corner Musical Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: G. E. Glaysher, 4, Chester Gardens, Argyle Road, London, W. 13.
- Derby Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: C. Hollinshead, "The Yews," Alvaston, near Derby.
- Dewsbury and District Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: K. Walker, 2, Clement Terrace, Dewsbury.
- Ealing and District Recorded Music Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: R. J. Paine. *Headquarters*: Ernest Benstead's Audition Room, Chapel Road, West Ealing, W. 13.
- East London Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: W. J. Worley, 209, Masterman Road, East Ham, E. 6.
- Edinburgh Gramophone and Phonograph Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: James McClure, 42, Eastfield, Joppa, Edinburgh.
- Erith Technical College Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: A. W. Knight, Erith Road, Belvedere.
- Glasgow and District Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: T. Macfarlane, 66, Prince Edward Street, Queen's Park, Glasgow, S. 2.
- Grimsby and Cleethorpes Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: S. Croft, 354, Cleethorpe Road, Grimsby.
- Halifax and District Recorded Music Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: J. S. Waring, "Avenham," 15, Willow Field Road, Halifax.
- Harrogate and District Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: H. W. Lambert, 40, Regent Terrace, Harrogate.
- Huddersfield Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: Mr. Henshaw, 43, Blacker Road, Birkby, Huddersfield.
- Hull and District Gramophonic Circle.**—*Hon. Sec.*: R. W. Slater, 33, Chaucer Street, Holderness Road, Hull.
- Inverness Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: Donald McIntosh, Castle Street, Inverness.
- Leeds Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: Harry Smith, 43, Gros-mont Place, Bramley, Leeds.
- Leicester Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: W. H. Abell, "Keniston," Clumber Road, Leicester.
- Liverpool and District Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: J. W. Harwood, 44, Barndale Road, Mossley Hill, Liverpool.
- Manchester Edison Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: L. Campbell-Kelly, 115, Sewerby Street, Moss Side, Manchester.
- Manchester Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: C. J. Brennand, Mirfield Wood Road, Whalley Range, Manchester.
- Nelson and District Gramophone Music Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: H. C. Wood, 18, Malvern Road, Nelson.
- North London Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: L. Ivory, 34, Granville Road, Stroud Green, N. 4.
- North-West London Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: E. G. Lamb, 74, Warwick Avenue, W. 9.
- Nottingham Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: Arthur Statham, 26, Mansfield Road, Nottingham.
- Preston Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: W. Weal, 250, Lancaster Road, Preston.
- Richmond and District Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: C. Sully, 30, Arlington Mansions, Chiswick, W. 4.
- Sheffield Gramophone and Phonograph Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: H. Acton, 48, Idsworth Road, Pitsmoor, Sheffield.
- South-East London Recorded Music Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: H. H. Flint, 67, Gourcock Road, Eltham, S.E. 9.
- South London Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: T. Mills, 14, Paynesfield Avenue, East Sheen, London, S.W. 14.
- Stoke-on-Trent Gramophone and Recorded Music Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: Geo. Chadwick, 17, Victoria Road, Fenton.
- Tyneside Gramophone and Phonograph Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: W. L. Murray Brooks, 70, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

## U.S.A.

- Boston Phonograph Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: R. D. Darrell, 104, Hillside Road, Watertown, Mass.
- Chicago Gramophone Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: Vories Fisher, Suite 1000, 208 So. La Salle Street, Chicago, Ill.
- New York Phonograph Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: P. H. Reed, Kew Hall, Kew Gardens, Long Island.
- Philadelphia Phonograph Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: James V. Yarnall, 1524, Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.
- Phonograph Art Society of Chicago.**—*Hon. Sec.*: George W. Oman, 414, North State Street, Chicago, Ill.
- Providence Phonograph Society.**—*Hon. Sec.*: c/o Mrs. Marion L. Misch, 601, Elmwood Avenue, Providence, R.I.



# TREASURE TROVE

## Lesser-known Operas and the Gramophone

By C. E. HEAD

MR. HERMAN KLEIN some time ago gave the readers of THE GRAMOPHONE three extremely interesting articles on "Gems from half-forgotten Operas," and it is inevitable that a number of operas which have faded from the memory should have been overlooked, for the difficulties of the task that he accomplished can be appreciated only by those who have themselves attempted to salve from the gramophone catalogues the scattered gems of bygone productions.

That invaluable book, "Opera at Home," admittedly covers the operatic field pretty thoroughly, but there still remain a number of operas from which records have been made, and which have not found a place in the pages of this book. This fact was brought home forcibly to me when, some little time ago, the Gramophone Company issued their record *Travellers all of Ev'ry Station*; for the opera from which it was taken, *The Siege of Rochelle*, was wholly unfamiliar to me, this discovery leading to the logical conclusion that if there was one opera with which I was unacquainted and from which records had been made, there must, surely, be others. A search through "Opera at Home" did not confirm this belief, but a careful scrutiny of one or two record catalogues revealed the fact that a record, or records, had been made from the lesser, and, it is to be presumed, almost forgotten operas. Mr. Klein's article further strengthened these observations, and rather ashamed of my operatic ignorance, I set to work to compile a list of these operas which had been totally overshadowed by the better-known works, and finally built up a surprisingly comprehensive list.

Still greater was my surprise when I heard these records. I had rather inclined to the belief that only one reason could account for the operas' lack of popularity and appreciation. It could not be that they are impossible of production, for there are scores of familiar operas which are never produced. This, therefore, left but one alternative—their mediocrity. This belief, however, was rudely shattered—in fact, it was practically dispersed—after I had heard the records in question, for in nearly every case a very high standard of music was revealed, and the fact that the music of these operas has passed into oblivion can, I think, only be accounted for by the fact that the particular airs recorded are infinitely superior to the rest of the opera in the majority of cases. Another point to be considered is that, generally speaking, the music

in question is entirely fresh to the average gramophone lover, and from this aspect it devolves into a question not so much how it is sung, played, or recorded (though these points should not be overlooked), but whether it is worthy of such treatment.

Let us consider these operas and their records.

### FRENCH OPERAS.

How many people nowadays are at all familiar with Gounod's first opera, *Sapho*? This work came to be written in a curious manner. Gounod had written several earlier works, mostly of a religious character, whose reception, while not actually hostile, had not been far removed from indifference, and embittered by this lack of appreciation, he seriously considered entering holy orders. At this critical period, however, he was approached by Madame Viardot, the famous singer, who had secured for him a commission to write an opera founded on the text by Emile Augier for the Académie Nationale de Musique, and *Sapho*, produced in 1851, was the result. While its success was not great, it was yet sufficient to be the means of encouraging Gounod to further efforts, and by this beginning the world was ultimately enriched by *Faust*. The main fault with the opera was that it was too advanced for contemporary French taste, and one critic even went so far as to say that it was an attempt to revive the system of musical declamation invented by Gluck. The only air from *Sapho* which is recorded, *O My Harp Immortal* (H.M.V., D.864), sung by Edna Thornton, while extremely interesting as showing Gounod's powers of composition in a less developed state, nevertheless bears definite traces of the genius which he possessed, and which was fully realised in his later work. The air itself, a tribute to the soothing qualities of the harp, is well sung and recorded, and has, naturally, a harp accompaniment, which is very effective.

Most of us, I think, have heard and know well the *Berceuse de Jocelyn*. Godard's opera *Jocelyn* has, curiously enough, not been included in "Opera at Home": but the records which have been made of the *Berceuse*, *Angels Guard Thee* by McCormack (H.M.V., D.B.577) and by Gluck in French under the title of *Cachés dans cet asile* (H.M.V., D.B.282), are an ample recompense for any portion of the opera not recorded. There are, of course, numerous other records of this air, both vocal and instrumental,



but the viola record by Lionel Tertis (Voc. D.02006) makes an appealing lullaby. McCormack's soft, caressing voice is eminently suited to a song of this type, with its gentle quasi-recitative and beautifully melodious air, the violin obbligato by Kreisler making an effective emphasis. Gluck's rendering, while of course considerably different in conception from that of the tenor, is equally pleasing, the lullaby spirit being caught to perfection.

When *Ascanio*, by Saint-Saëns, was first produced at the Paris Opera in 1890, it achieved very little success, chiefly on account of its execrable text, and its revival a few years ago under the personal supervision of its composer was scarcely any better. Despite the fact that the opera contains some of Saint-Saëns' finest writing, its impossible libretto completely overshadowed any good points which it might contain. The story deals with Benvenuto Cellini's pupil, Ascanio, who is in love with Colombe, also loved by Cellini, but who returns Ascanio's affection. To complicate matters further Cellini is loved by Scozzzone, and Ascanio by the Duchesse d'Etampes. In order that their love may not go unrequited these two latter arrange that the unfortunate Colombe shall be suffocated in a coffin, which is introduced, but repenting of her complicity in such crime Scozzzone allows herself to be suffocated in the place of her rival. Benvenuto gives his blessing to Ascanio and Colombe, and all, presumably, is well. Saint-Saëns does his best with such material, which is founded on Meurice's drama, *Benvenuto Cellini*, but the result, one fears, was hardly worth the effort. *Enfants, je ne vous en veux pas* (H.M.V., D.A.481), taken from this opera and sung by Journet, is one of Cellini's airs, and though there are several songs in *Ascanio* which are considerably more attractive, this record is not unlikeable. The singer, however, does not seem altogether at his ease, and this is scarcely an improvement.

In the course of his self-imposed task of altering French musical taste, Offenbach wrote what proved to be one of the most popular operas-bouffe ever produced, *Orphée aux Enfers*, and it is, therefore, rather surprising that only three records have been made from this work, a double-sided overture (Col. 476), a selection by De Groot's orchestra, and the overture by the Regent Symphony Orchestra (Voc. K.05028), which records will make a strong appeal to the lover of light music, though it is to be regretted that the Vocalion disc gives only one side to *Orphée aux Enfers*. The overture is practically confined to two movements, the first for the woodwind and the second for the strings, and I rather think that this latter movement, of the sugary variety, will be familiar to many people.

#### ENGLISH OPERAS.

Wallace, famous for his *Maritana*, has naturally nearly always been coupled with Balfe, although

the former has, in many respects, a finer and more delicate touch than his contemporary. His opera *Lurline* concerns the Count Rudolph who, almost betrothed to Ghiva, is enticed by means of a magic ring to the dwelling of the Rhine-maiden, Lurline. Returning to his earthly haunts for a short period, the Count is about to be murdered by some of his friends for the fabulous wealth he has acquired, when he is saved by Lurline, the magic music of whose harp prevents the assassins from striking. The song *Gentle Troubadour* (H.M.V., E. 298) has been recorded, and sung by Edna Thornton it is a sheer delight of melody. This is the air in which the deserted Ghiva entreats the return of her faithless troubadour, the Count, and its predominant note is its wistful freshness, cleverly depicting hope and faith, while the listener is almost unconsciously aware of the underlying sadness.

*Travellers all of Ev'ry Station* (H.M.V., C.1169), from Balfe's *Siege of Rochelle* and sung by Peter Dawson, is apt to be a little startling at the first hearing. The swift outrush of words and the unconventional style of music seems so meaningless until, after a time, this song takes a hold on the imagination. For a proper appreciation of the air I would recommend any possessor of this record to obtain the words, since the song is a rare example where the words are inseparable from the music. It is well recorded, and Mr. Dawson is to be congratulated on a very effective rendering of a very difficult air. It may be mentioned in passing that when produced at the Drury Lane Theatre in 1835 *The Siege of Rochelle* was rapturously received, which is not to be wondered at with this record as an example.

*Esmeralda*, by W. Goring Thomas, an opera specially commissioned by Carl Rosa, achieved a remarkable success, for after its first production at Drury Lane in 1883, it was presented in German at Cologne and Hamburg, and in French at Covent Garden. This composer's music, which bears traces of his early French training, is exceedingly light and melodious, and the record *O Vision Entrancing* (H.M.V., D.860) from this opera, is a very fair example of this composer's work. It is interesting to note that at one time Goring Thomas studied under Sir Arthur (then plain Mr.) Sullivan.

As has been frequently said, *Lionel and Clarissa* is English—pure, melodious English—and as it is in a good cause, there cannot be much harm in my repeating it, for it is worthy of all praise. The records which have lately been issued from this opera have, no doubt, been adequately reviewed elsewhere, but a few words on one aspect which has struck me will, perhaps, be taken in the form of a word to the wise. When I first heard these records I was not at all impressed; to be honest, I was repelled. Determined, however, to give them a fair chance, I heard the opera itself at the Lyric



Theatre, and thereafter all was changed. Having actually seen the play the recorded music takes on a fresh significance, and more than vividly brings back recollections of the opera.

The most noticeable record in this respect is *Indeed forsooth, a Pretty Youth*. The memory of the amorous Colonel Oldboy and the indignant Jenny rejecting his advances will not be easily forgotten, and the swift orchestral passage at the close of the air should bring forth many a chuckle as one remembers the deliciously funny sight of the portly Colonel panting after the light-footed Jenny. An air that indelibly stamps itself on the mind is *O What a night is here for love*, and makes what is, perhaps, a perfect finale to a flawless scene. On one side of the stage we have the two lovers, Harman and Diana; on the opposite side Lionel and Clarissa; while in the centre at the back stands Colonel Oldboy, blissfully unconscious of the young lovers before him. In reminiscent strain he sings *O what a night is here for love*, but the four young people are only in the very serious present, and are entirely oblivious of any levity. This, in my opinion, is the best number in the opera. Another record that will tickle the memory is *How Cursedly Vexed*. As has been indicated, in Colonel Oldboy there lingers, for all his age, a strong dash of romance, which leads him into materially assisting Harman to elope with the lady of his choice, who, if he only knew it, is his own daughter, Diana, and in this trio he assures Harman of the success of the scheme if only everything is left to him. It was, and success naturally follows.

The other records which have been made from *Lionel and Clarissa* will amply recapture the spirit fostered by the actual production, which very gracefully and very successfully bridges the gulf of two centuries.

I must confess that until a few months ago the music of *The Immortal Hour* by Rutland Boughton was quite unknown to me, but that grave omission has been speedily rectified. There are three records of the charming *Faery Song*; by Arthur Jordan (Col. 3485), W. Heseltine (Col. 3546) and Harold Farrar (H.M.V., B.1759), and the best of the three is undoubtedly that by Arthur Jordan. He sings this simple, lilting little air as though he were in league with the fairies themselves, and he has very successfully achieved the fairy atmosphere, but his success with this song is, perhaps, only natural, since he studied under Mr. Boughton. The other two records are both quite good, though the singers are more material in their interpretation of Midir's tuneful air that lures Etaine back to the Land of the Young. Another record from this work is the *Faery Chorus* (Col. 935), very sympathetically played by the London Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Rutland Boughton. The theme of this piece is the *Faery Song*, but seems disposed to end on a

mystic, almost majestic, passage, when the strings mischievously complete the finale with a quick repetition of the theme. The reverse side of this record, *The Love Duet* from the same opera, is equally fascinating, even though the music is not so ethereal as the chorus. An hour with this opera is, indeed, an immortal hour.

#### GERMAN OPERAS.

When Gluck's *Paride ed Elena*, this third of his operas written to Calzabigi's libretto, was first produced in Vienna, it met with little success, the Viennese not appreciating his theory, demonstrated in this opera, that music should be written for its own sake and value and not for the benefit of any one singer or any particular voice. The only record made from this opera, *O dal mio dolce ardor* (H.M.V., D.B.731) is a good example of this theory, and this fact is supported by the artless style of singing adopted by Battistini, who, never straining after effect, contents himself with a simple recital of a simple theme.

*La Clemenza di Toto*, from which *Non più di fiori* (H.M.V., D.B.517) is taken, was written by Mozart at the invitation of the Estates of Bohemia for the coronation of Leopold II. at Prague, but it met with a cold reception, the libretto being both dull and entirely unsuited to Mozart's capabilities. I do not particularly care for Lunn's rendering of *Non più*, but it must be admitted that the material on which the singer has to work is very poor. The only word which can adequately describe the air is "scrappy." First we have a bar or two in one theme, but the following passage seems to owe its existence to an entirely different inspiration. To me, at any rate, the effect was unsatisfactory.

Two jolly airs are *When a maiden takes your fancy* and *Ah! my pretty brace of fellows* (H.M.V., D.114) from Mozart's *Die Entführung*, the title in the catalogue being *Il Seraglio*, both airs being sung by Robert Radford. When it was first produced this opera was an instantaneous success, and it has been stated that it was instrumental in raising the national "Singspiel," in addition to being evidence of Mozart's own high literary sense—considerably higher, in fact, than that of most composers—for Osmin, by far the most real and living character in *Die Entführung*, is his sole creation, even to the words. The opera is the story of the Bashaw Selim who carries off Constance and her English maid, Blonda, to the Seraglio in Morocco in order that he may woo the former, who is, however, finally rescued by her lover, Belmont. *When a maiden takes your fancy* is the plan of campaign outlined by Belmont's servant, Pedrillo, to win the heart of a maid, in his particular case and at that particular time, Blonda. The downward passage of Mr. Radford's "tra la la la" is a delightfully exaggerated expression of languishing love, but the final passage seem



to indicate that his mind is made up to stand no more nonsense from the lady! *Ah! my pretty brace of fellows* is another rollicking song, which is, in places, slightly reminiscent of Sullivan, and in which the singer, Osmin, cheerfully predicts the fate awaiting Belmont and Pedrillo, whom he has caught trying to rescue the prisoners. The irony of his cheerfulness is fully appreciated when one knows that the Bashaw spontaneously and magnanimously releases the ladies to their separate lovers.

There are several works in existence which are but a shade removed from operas, and might almost be described as secular oratorios, although the particular one which I have in mind is Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, which might be described as an opera without action, is, in actual fact, an English pastoral opera. This opera, founded on the thirteenth book of Ovid's "Metamorphoses," was successfully produced at the Haymarket Theatre in 1732, and it is, perhaps, a little unfortunate that the name of the English poet, John Gay, of *Beggar's Opera* fame, who wrote the libretto, should have been lost sight of in the shadow of that of the famous composer. *O ruddier than the cherry* from this work is fairly frequently heard on the concert platform, and is well recorded by Robert Radford (H.M.V., D.256) and by Norman Allin (Col. 747), and although there is very little disparity between the two, I rather prefer the latter. His interpretation of a giant in the throes of love is one of the best I have heard, and the effect which he produces of a giant's huge laugh caused by a prolonged "Merry" is a fine example of how this should be done. Robert Radford's rendering, while slightly less robust, nevertheless loses very little by this fact. I also like Tudor Davies's *Love sounds the alarm* (H.M.V., D.839) from the same opera, to which type of song his voice is well suited.

#### ITALIAN OPERAS.

As is well known, Mascagni entirely failed to equal the spectacular success of his famous *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and although he wrote several other operas each was, admittedly, a failure. I must confess, however, that to a certain extent I like the duet *Va nella tua stanzetta* from this composer's *Piccolo Marat*, and sung by de' Muro and Viganò (H.M.V., D.B.558) which, in one passage at least, rises to a height that is quite equal to the duet between Turiddu and Santuzza in *Cavalleria*. If de' Muro's singing did not show a decided nasal tendency, and an occasional harshness were not apparent this would be a thoroughly likeable record.

The opera *Crispino e la Comare* (*The Cobbler and the Fairy*), by F. and L. Ricci, first produced at the Gallo Theatre, Venice, in 1850, is a satire on the medical profession, dealing with a poor but worthy cobbler who is transformed into an Illustrious Doctor

by the fairy, and by the wonderful cures he is able to effect becomes enormously wealthy. His head, however, is turned by success, and as a punishment he is transported to an underground tavern, the fairy telling him he is about to die. La Comare, however, is won over by his pleadings, and allows him to return to his family. *Io non sono più* (H.M.V., D.B.535) taken from this opera, and sung by Tetrizzini, is the joyous song of the cobbler's wife, Annetta, who, when at last convinced of her husband's new position, visualises the glorious future. "A countess, therefore, without money," she sings, "is far below a doctor's wife blessed with treasures such as mine. Ah, the pleasures that await me, I in thought already taste." Tetrizzini makes the most of the opportunities presented by this air.

There are several Italian operas from which records have been made and about which very little can be said. An air that is well sung and recorded is *Disse il saggio* (H.M.V., D.A.162) from Titta's *Malena*, and Ruffo adequately brings out its martial air. *Si io t'amo*, from *Madame de Belle Isle* by Samara, is very ordinary, while Paoli, the singer, obviously has difficulty with the top notes. *Guiletta! son io*, from Zandonai's *Guiletta e Romeo* (with true courtesy the lady is mentioned first!), hardly suggests a passionate love duet, its harsh and strident volumes of sound being not dissimilar from a dog fight.

Although it does not come under the classification of Italian opera, I would like to mention *Slovachá pisen* (H.M.V., D.A.505), from Kovarovic's unfinished opera *Nazarenos*, and sung by Destinn in Czech. Its language effectively prevents any intelligent appreciation of the burden of the air, but it should make an appeal to those who like "something different."

I have reached the end of my operatic delvings, and it will be seen that, although there are exceptions, the general result has been one of satisfaction, quite a number of the records, in fact, doing far more than giving satisfaction, but even raising one's musical enthusiasm to a high pitch. It would be neither fair nor easy to say which is the best of the records given above, but it will not, I think, be hard to find where, figuratively speaking, my heart lies. Fresh music has been discovered, new theories and methods of composition unearthed, traces of genius revealed in the early works of composers subsequently famous, and many other interesting facts brought to light, and the result has been worth far more than the toil.

If only this article brings to the notice of readers such of the operas and airs that may be new to them, and if, by so doing, can create as much pleasure as I have experienced, then I shall be more than rewarded.



## ROSSINI'S "BARBER OF SEVILLE" ON RECORDS

By JOHN C. W. CHAPMAN

ONE of the pleasantest gramophonic tasks I have ever set myself has been to form a small collection of choice celebrity recordings from Rossini's immortal opera, "The Barber of Seville." Whether or not I have chosen the best versions extant in cases where several exist is debatable. But the result of my efforts, which have been made with due regard to the desirability of possessing really creditable records of this delightful music, prompts me to place it before readers of THE GRAMOPHONE, in the hope that—where it does not already do so—"Il Barbiere" will eventually occupy that place in their affections and record libraries which this work of genius so richly deserves.

Rossini received a sum amounting to eighty pounds for this opera—known originally as "Almaviva, ossia l'inutile precauzione"—which was composed and mounted within a month. The text was by Sterbini, after Beaumarchais. In spite of its enormous success later, it was received with hostility at its production at the Argentina, Rome, on February 5th, 1816. The first performance in London took place nearly two years later—on January 27th, 1818, at the King's Theatre. Briefly sketched, the plot is as follows: Count Almaviva (tenor) is in love with Rosina (soprano), the ward of Dr. Bartolo (baritone), who desires to wed her himself. Almaviva (who poses to Rosina as "Lindor," a student) is aided by Figaro (baritone), the town barber and factotum of Seville. Bartolo, becoming suspicious, plots with Don Basilio (bass), Rosina's music master, to calumniate Almaviva and wed his ward. But they are defeated by the various stratagems of the Count and the Barber of Seville, and in the end the former weds his inamorata, her guardian finding Rosina's dowry sufficient compensation for his forced consent to the marriage. More detailed information appears in "Opera at Home" (The Gramophone Co., Ltd., 5s. net).

## THE COMPLETE OPERA.

There is an excellent complete version of the opera on fifteen twelve-inch and two ten-inch double-sided His Master's Voice discs at plum label prices, the cast being as follows: Almaviva, Edoardo Taliani; Figaro, Ernesto Badini; Bartolo, Carnevali Davide; Basilio, Di Lelio Umberto; Rosina, Malvina Pereira; chorus and orchestra of La Scala Theatre, Milan; conductor, Carlo Sabajno. (See "Opera at Home" for full details.) These fine artists caused a considerable sensation when they appeared in Paris about four years ago; and Badini also appeared at Covent Garden on the 28th of May last year. To all who desire to have a complete "Il Barbiere" in the best Italian style these excellent records will strongly appeal. There is not space in an article of this nature to deal with them more fully. "Manco una foglio" is substituted for "A un dottor della mia sorte," Bartolo's aria which occurs shortly before the end of the first act.

## CELEBRITY AND MISCELLANEOUS RECORDINGS.

In spite of the desirability of the foregoing group of records, it is probable that the majority of gramophonists are more strongly attracted by fine versions of the best-known portions of the opera recorded by singers whose superb artistry has justly earned for them world-wide fame. In detailing these super-records I have added more popular-priced discs in an endeavour to compile as complete a list as possible of "The Barber of Seville" recordings. With the exception of the Victor noted below I have not included any records manufactured outside Great Britain.

*Overture.*—(According to Grove the original overture was lost. The present one belongs to "Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra," an opera produced in the autumn of 1815, and

appears to have originated in "Aureliano in Palmira," produced in December, 1813, and doomed to failure.) By the Metropolitan Opera House Orchestra of New York, conducted by Gennaro Papi (Vocalion K.05119). Very pleasant, somewhat on the quiet side, but thoroughly effective and satisfactory. It may be regarded as one of the three standard records of the Overture, one being included in the complete opera and the third by the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Percy Pitt. The last-named, an electrical Columbia (9166), is extremely well done. I prefer the Vocalion. The numerous versions backed by other works are more or less extensively abridged. The best of these are by the Hallé Orchestra (Columbia L.1428), the Beecham Orchestra (Columbia L.1075), the Life Guards (Vocalion K.05055), the Grenadier Guards (Columbia 582), the Coldstream Guards (H.M.V., C.120), and the Imperial Military Band (Pathé 5475).

## ACT I.

*Ecco Ridente in Cielo* (Lo, smiling in the Orient sky). Sung by Count Almaviva.—(Grove states that the opening of this *Caratina* is taken from the first chorus in "Aureliano"). By Tito Schipa (Actuelle 15191 and Pathé 5215); by Florencio Constantino (Columbia A.706). The Actuelle version (of which the Pathé is a duplicate) occupies both sides of a Size 12 disc, on which this aria—it is labelled *Caratina*—is recorded in full. The beautiful quality of Schipa's voice and the delicacy of his singing have been well caught. The orchestral accompaniment is adequate and the surface good. I strongly recommend this record. Constantino sings divinely to a charming accompaniment, but the technical defects of a pre-war recording are apparent. (Note.—There is another version of this aria by Tito Schipa on Victor 965. It is coupled with *Se il mio nome* by the same artist, and is obtainable from the Gramophone Exchange, New Oxford Street. His Master's Voice do not supply it.)

*Largo al Factotum della Città* (Room for the Factotum). Sung by Figaro.—By Riccardo Stracciari (Columbia 7352); by Pasquale Amato (H.M.V., D.B.155); by Titta Ruffo (H.M.V., D.B.405, D.B.502, No. 2 catalogue, and Pathé 5244). By Emilio de Gogorza (H.M.V., D.B.183); by Giuseppe de Luca (H.M.V., D.B.217); by Giuseppe Campanari (Columbia A.5128); by G. Mario Sammarco (Actuelle 15205 and Pathé 5664); by Giacomo Rimini (Vocalion A.0204); by George Baker, in Italian (Vocalion J.04104); by Apollo Granforte (H.M.V., D.B.834); by Lewys James (H.M.V., D.237); by Peter Dawson (H.M.V., C.1007); by Ugo Donarelli (Edison Bell Velvet Face 532). The first three recordings are superb, and whilst I prefer Stracciari's mighty Columbia, others with equal reason may choose Amato or Ruffo, the best of whose three recordings is D.B.405. De Gogorza and De Luca do well. The Campanari record is a fine one with an attractive Rossini obverse. Sammarco's capital record is marred by a cut. The two Vocalions, each of which has much to recommend it, and the comparatively recent and well-sung Granforte disc deserve consideration. I do not care for the English versions by James and Dawson; idiomatic Italian sung at hurricane speed suffers in translation. Donarelli, if not first rate, makes a creditable record.

*Se il mio nome* (If my name you would know). Sung by Count Almaviva.—By Dmitri Smirnoff (H.M.V., D.B.582); by Fernando de Lucia (H.M.V. 2-52667, single-sided, No. 2 catalogue). The charming Smirnoff record, coupled with *Giunto sul passo estremo* (*Mefistofele*) is first rate in every way, and I cordially recommend its acquisition. It has disappeared from the 1927 list and will probably be transferred to No. 2 catalogue. The exquisite singing of De Lucia is perceptible, in



spite of the comparatively defective recording of eighteen years ago. It is as an example of the art of a great tenor that this record makes its appeal. (See note to *Ecco Ridente*).

*All' idea di quel metallo portentoso* (Mighty Jove, in golden shower). Sung by Count Almaviva and Figaro.—By Fernando de Lucia and Pini Corsi (H.M.V., D.B.388, No. 2 catalogue); by John McCormack and G. Mario Sammarco (H.M.V., D.B.608). Except for one large cut these two records provide the whole of this lengthy duet including *Ah, che d'amore*. The De Lucia and Pini Corsi recording was made in 1907, and sounds like it—particularly the orchestra; the McCormack and Sammarco record, which follows on, is a capital example of the singing of both these fine artists, and Sammarco makes the most of the little "one-note solo" commencing "Numero quindici." The obverse—which with advantage might have been devoted to a new recording of the first part of *All' idea*—is occupied by *O grido di quest' anima* (*La Gioconda*) by the same pair—an incongruous coupling which should have been avoided.

*Una Voce Poco Fa* (A little voice I heard just now). Sung by Rosina.—By Amelita Galli-Curci (H.M.V., D.B.261). By Evelyn Scotney (Vocalion A.0214); by Celys Beralta (Vocalion J.04110); by Marcella Sembrich (H.M.V., D.B.431); by Luisa Tetrazzini (H.M.V., D.B.690); by Frieda Hempel (H.M.V., D.B.455, No. 2 catalogue, sung in German and labelled "Frag' ich mein"); by Eugénie Bronskaja (Columbia A.5209); by Toti Dal Monte (H.M.V., D.B.830); by Virginia Rea (Brunswick 25016); by Selma Kurz (H.M.V., D.A.408, No. 2 catalogue); by Fritzi Jokl (Parlophone E.10461); by Marion Talley (H.M.V., D.B.936); by Gwladys Naish (Edison Bell Velvet Face 695). So many to choose from make selection difficult. Mr. Herman Klein's article, "The Recording of *Una Voce*," which appeared in THE GRAMOPHONE of July, 1924, should be referred to. He deals with the first five versions, giving preference to Galli-Curci. It is a pity that he did not include the complete double-sided versions by Hempel and Bronskaja, which—notwithstanding that the first-named sings in German—I regard as the two finest recordings. Hempel takes the aria slowly and caressingly, and rises to miraculous heights in the second side. Mr. B. D. Wratten, in his valuable article on Frieda Hempel, placed this record second in order of merit on the "historical" list, and affirmed that Hempel's discs in this category are almost as good as her more recent ones. Bronskaja provides an original and elaborately florid rendering, perfectly and charmingly sung. Both these records have excellent orchestral accompaniments and practically flawless surfaces. They should receive preferential consideration to any of the single-sided versions, of which the popular Galli-Curci is undoubtedly the best. The Dal Monte, Rea, and Kurz recordings must have numerous admirers. The Jokl complete version, sung in German, is decidedly inferior to Hempel's, which it resembles, but wonderful value for money. Marion Talley is "electrically" brilliant on a single side. So, too, is Gwladys Naish, but a less perfect singer. For four shillings this disc is really marvellous.

*La Calunnia e un venticello* (Calumny is like a zephyr). Sung by Basilio.—By José Mardones (Columbia A.5200); by

Theodor Chaliapine (H.M.V., D.B.107); by Marcel Journet (H.M.V., D.B.308); by Virgilio Lazzari (Vocalion A.0222). Of these four splendid records I prefer that by Mardones—a truly magnificent one, coupled with a noble interpretation of the *Mephistopheles Serenade* from *Faust*. (Note.—D.B.932 and D.B.921 are electric re-recordings of the Chaliapine and Journet versions, the latter of which displaces the acoustic recording noted above.)

*Dunque io son, tu non m'inganni?* (What, am I, or dost thou mock me?). Sung by Rosina and Figaro.—The only record at present available is that by Maria Galvany and Titta Ruffo (H.M.V., D.B.400, No. 2 catalogue), which I do not like so well as the pre-war Columbia recorded in America by Lydia Lipkowska and Ramon Blanchart, of which I have the good fortune to possess a fine new process pressing. The superior recording of the H.M.V. does not compensate for the omission of one of the most charming episodes of the duet, delightfully sung—and acted—by the Columbia artists. Nevertheless the record is a fine one. The obverse is *Spargi d'amaro pianto* (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), charmingly sung by Galvany.

*A un dottor della mia sorte* (To a doctor of my rank). Sung by Bartolo.—This aria is frequently substituted by *Manco una foglio*. By Allard, of the Opéra Comique, Paris (Actuelle F.502). Listed as "Air de Bartholo" and sung in French. Its obverse, by the same baritone, is *Si les filles d'Arles sont reines* (*Mireille*). Both sides are first rate, though the disc costs only half-a-crown. Allard has a fine voice and knows how to use it; the recording is excellent and the surface good.

#### ACT II.

*The Music Lesson*.—The summary of arias given in "Opera at Home," which can be considerably extended should be referred to. It is not expedient, in an article, dealing with Rossini's music, to include a somewhat lengthy list of records based on the whims of prima donnas.

*Ah, qual colpo inaspettato!* (Oh, what unexpected bliss!). Sung by Count Almaviva, Rosina, and Figaro.—By Fernando De Lucia, Giuseppina Huguet, and Pini Corsi (H.M.V., D.B.388, No. 2 catalogue). This trio was recorded in 1907, and is greatly superior technically to its obverse, the first half of *All' idea*. The three voices are well recorded to a piano accompaniment, and Huguet has little tendency to blast. The latter portion comprises part of *Zitti, zitti*. This trio is quite satisfactory, even the piano doing well, but I cannot say as much for its companion side.

The majority of these records have been played on my Columbia Grafonola, using Nos. 6 and 7 Columbia sound-boxes. All the Pathé (sapphire-cut) records referred to can be recommended. They should be played with an ivory-set sapphire. Mr. H. F. V. Little kindly furnished me with much valuable information. For courteous and greatly appreciated assistance I am indebted to the Gramophone, Columbia, Pathé, and Edison Bell Companies.

JOHN C. W. CHAPMAN.

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# THE FORUM

The following articles are unsolicited contributions from readers, dealing with this or that aspect of the gramophone to which each has given thought. A selection from the MSS. received is published nearly every month, and prizes are offered after every third month of *The Forum*. Articles should not exceed 1,500 words, and should be typewritten or written very legibly on one side only of the paper. They should be sent to THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, London, W. 1, marked "The Forum"; and a stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed.

This month completes the three months and readers are now asked to register their votes by stating on a postcard the three articles in *The Forum* of the February, March and May numbers of "The Gramophone" which they consider worthy of awards, in the order of preference. Postcards should be marked "Forum," and should be sent to the above address, to reach the office before May 12th.

The First Prize will be Five Pounds, the second Three Pounds, the third Two Pounds. Records of the value of One Pound will be sent to the reader who gets the winning list; or, if many readers coincide in their preferences, the Editor's discretion in awarding them must be accepted.



## "TURANDOT" AND "NERONE"

By A. M. GORDON BROWN

UNDOUBTEDLY the productions of these posthumous operas of Puccini and Boito were the most eagerly awaited events in the operatic world of to-day, and the first records of each were as eagerly awaited by the gramophonic world. Both operas provide much good food for the recording companies, and the rivals, H.M.V. and Columbia, brought out "Nerone" records very soon after its production in May, 1924. Columbia were actually the first, but H.M.V. went one better by issuing a series of Neronian records sung by the creators of the various rôles. Fonotopia have also brought out some Neronian records recently, but owing to the great difficulty of obtaining these they need not (with the exception of that of Pertile, the original protagonist) be taken into much consideration. Thus, though there are many passages in this masterpiece of grandiose music-drama that I look forward to seeing in the catalogues, a fairly representative series of records is now available.

"Turandot" differs widely from "Nerone" their only point of similarity being the fact that they are both their respective composers' most ambitious work. "Turandot" is not so superior to Puccini's other works as "Nerone" is to "Mefistofele," yet it seems to me that in "Turandot" Puccini has most skilfully combined his best ideas, especially ideas which originated in "Butterfly" and "Gianni Schicchi." So far the only records of "Turandot" are the German ones recently issued by the Polydor Co., and I find the translation rather disconcerting, particularly in the ravishing trio of the ministers, Ping (baritone), Pang (tenor), and Pong (tenor), but doubtless some Italian records will follow, and I sincerely hope this trio among the first. We may be sure of having double-sided records comprising the two typical tenor solos, "Non piangere Liù" (Act I.) and "Nessun dorma!" (Act III.) and Liù's airs recorded *ad nauseam* in the future, but I eagerly look forward to the first of these, say by Fleta and Zamboni (the creators of the rôles).

Quite recently Liù's two arias from "Turandot" have been issued at a very moderate price on H.M.V. (B2402), sung by Rosina Torri; whom I remember as a most attractive interpreter of the rôle of Liù at the opera's production in Rome last year. It is an electrical recording and the sweet voice of Rosina Torri comes out to great advantage. Considering the price asked for it, it constitutes one of the greatest bargains to be obtained in the H.M.V. catalogue.

To return to "Nerone," I am surprised that these superb records have not attracted more notice of those people who are for ever grumbling about the ever-increasing numbers of *Salut demeure*s and *Celeste Aidas*. For me "Nerone" is quite the finest post-"Otello" music drama.

Early in Act I. comes Nerone's funeral oration over the ashes of his murdered mother—*Queste ad un lido fatal*. This eloquent passage has been recorded on Fonotopia (N.74.934) by Aureliano Pertile,\* whose phrasing and interpretation of the title rôle have won the admiration of all who heard him in it. Some ten pages later comes Asteria's half-delirious confession to Simon Mago of her infatuation for the cruel emperor, *E il mio Nume. e l'adoro!*; the music is expressive, but so far there is no very satisfactory record of it; I don't much care for that of Inez Lombardi (Fono. E.74.247). Shortly after this we have the peculiarly effective setting of the Lord's Prayer, *Padre nostro*, which Rubria sings kneeling at a shrine. Luisa Bertana's\* artistic phrasing and limpid tone make H.M.V., D.B.733 irresistible. Another eight pages brings us to the *pièce de résistance* of the first act, the wonderful *Simony*, where Simon the Sorcerer offers the apostle Fanuèl money for the gift of performing miracles, and offers out in high-flown language hopes of immense worldly power. For some unknown reason the superb record of this (H.M.V., D.B.819) of Marcel Journet\* is only in the Italian catalogue, but in spite of its rather poor reverse (Lo Giudice's *Queste ad un lido*) it is well worth having. One side of a record is not, however, sufficient for this eloquent declamation, and we have to look to Autori and Badini (Col. D.1483) to continue from where Journet leaves off. Autori is a poor substitute for Journet, but he does his job adequately, and Badini sings, or rather shouts, Fanuèl's curses in thrilling accents.

In Act II. the first record is *Ecco il magico specchio*, or, more strictly speaking, *Nell'antro ov'io m'ascondo* (H.M.V., D.B.733), which Simon sings while awaiting the arrival of Asteria into his cell, whom he has persuaded to pose as the goddess whom Nerone comes to placate for his crime. During the aria Asteria enters and ascends the throne prepared for her; she is followed by Nerone, whom Simon orders to look at the goddess through his magic mirror. The whole is exquisitely sung by Marcel Journet.\*

\*Asterisks after an artist's name denote that he or she created the rôle in question.



The marvellous scene between Nerone and Asteria which follows has not yet been recorded in anything like its entirety. The longest consecutive fragment is that of Nerone's supplication, *O come viene a errar*, by Franco Lo Giudice (Italian H.M.V.), who gets in nine pages on two sides of a twelve-inch record, but Pertile's\* *Ecco la dea si china* (part of the same passage), though 24 bars shorter, is much better (Fono, N.74.935). The finale of this act is most invigorating music, but has only been recorded on a ten-inch disc (Fono, B.152595), by Pollicino and Lombardi, which is too short to be worth bothering about.

The only record from Act III. is Fanuël's farewell to his flock. The music is beautiful, but not on a par dramatically with that of the previous acts. There are three excellent recordings of this: *Vivete in pace*, by Mariano Stabile (Fono, N.74.930); by Ernesto Badini (Col. D.1484); and by Carlo Galeffi\* (the finest of all), who on two sides of H.M.V., D.B.734 sings much more than the other two.

The marvellously exciting introduction to Act IV. has been recorded by the Symphony Orchestra and chorus (H.M.V., D.938), but curiously enough Albert Coates does not seem to have put enough verve into it, and Toscanini's rendering of it is much finer.

The dying Rubria's (dying of injuries received when Rome burnt) confession to Fanuël that though spiritually a Christian she had through fear of Nerone outwardly remained a vestal virgin, has been recorded by Lina Lanza (Col. D.1484), who sings it with feeling and pathos, but her tone is vastly inferior to that of Luisa Bertana,\* who with Carlo Galeffi\* continues the duet from where Lanza stops to within seven pages of the end of the opera (H.M.V., D.B.732). Lanza and Badini and Agazzino and Stabile also record the last half of the duet, *Sento che ascende*, but the Bertana-Galeffi combination cannot be bettered.

A. M. GORDON BROWN.



## METHODS OF STORING RECORDS

By "SCRUTATOR"

REGULAR readers of THE GRAMOPHONE are doubtless well aware of the fact that I am simply overflowing with the milk of human kindness, benevolence, and philanthropy; always ready to help gramophonic lame dogs over stiles, and prepared to hand out jugfuls of advice (or "jugs full" as the case may be) whether it is wanted or not.

Having recently carried out exhaustive investigations on the vexed question of various ways in which records may be stored, I have now great pleasure in passing on the results of my researches for what they are worth, which may or may not be much.

The first method is one which ought to commend itself to those wireless enthusiasts who are also, and notwithstanding, gramophiles, and consists in storing the records one on top of the other without envelopes or covers of any kind whatsoever. This has the most desirable result of causing numerous scratches, poek-marks, abrasions, cracks, and the like, to appear on the surface thereof, with the result that when played, wonderful "atmospheric" effects are reproduced. When the pile of records reaches the height of the ceiling, the services of a capable joiner should be requisitioned to cut a hole therein so that the records may proceed heavenwards uninterruptedly. This may necessitate moving the bed, but that is a small matter to the earnest student of gramophones. To avoid this, however, the position of the first records should be carefully measured with a plumbob, straight-edge, slide-rule, and logarithms, and these dimensions carefully marked in chalk on the bedroom carpet above so that suitable re-arrangements of furniture, gaspipes, and fittings, may be made beforehand.

The second method is one practised by two lady—I beg pardon—women friends of mine (Phew! by gad!! that was a narrow squeak; I nearly got the real dogs-bodies after me that time!!!). This method consists of storing the records upright in a vertical fling cabinet, without any register, list, or means of identification, and it works splendidly, if rather expensively. We will presume that having called upon them (with my wife, of course: one has to be most circumspect in a colliery village!), I ask them to put a really stout piece on, good highbrow stuff like Stravinsky's *L'Oiseau de Feu*, or Ketelbey's *Persian Market*. The performance promptly commences. Ermyntrude gets on her knees in a most unwonted attitude, as if

before some footling idol, and after a few moments silent prayer and meditation, pulls out about half-a-dozen records and deposits them on the floor. "Dash it," she observes (being a lady—I mean a woman) but actually meaning something stronger, "I'm sure we put it in this end ast time we had it out." "Of course we did *not*," cries Angeline as she takes up a devotional position by the side of Ermyntrude, "I remember putting it in the middle." Further extractions are made, and by this time about 50 records strew the floor. Suddenly Ermyntrude shouts, "Oh! I remember we put it over here," and kneels in a fresh position on three records Angeline has just put down, and an ominous crack is heard. "Look at that," they both indignantly burst out, glaring ferociously at each other, "Now you've done it!". Suddenly Angeline's face lights up. "Oh! it's just come to me, now didn't we lend it to Mrs. Cholmondely-Bottomley when she was in the other evening?" By this time about 70 of the 100 records are on the floor, and I haven't the pluck to ask for another one, so they play them Lancashire fashion "one deaun t'other come on" as they are put back into the cabinet, all records in more than three pieces being thrown out. This method is very exciting and should only be adopted by people with strong nerves.

The third method is to keep your records in albums, on the inside cover of which the titles are written. This is all right till some fathead goes and puts a record in the wrong envelope or album, when the system is apt to break down. To obviate this, a staff of shorthand typists, ledger clerks, railway porters, haulage hands, and coal heavers, is necessary in order that a proper catalogue with a system of cross-references may be kept, embracing "make," "colour of label," "price," "artiste," "size" (of record, not of artiste), "orchestras," "bands," "Hawaiian guitars," and so on *ad lib*. Even then the system is apt to get so involved that it is practically impossible to find a record. It is also rather cumbersome to have to haul out and put back a dozen records every time you only want one, but it is excellent for the liver and kidneys, and splendid exercise for the muscles of the stomach and back.

The fourth and final method is, speaking from memory, known as the "Pantomime," at any rate, it has something to do with Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. This method consists of storing your records 150 at a time on the flat (which about half the gramophile experts say is the correct



way, the other half avowing the opposite!) in a sort of magic cupboard, which on hearing the cryptic words "up guards and at 'em," or "not a minute on the day, not a cent off the pay" (I just forget which) slowly and majestically opens revealing all the titles at once. I understand that the cupboard is operated by a small vertical air-compressor attached to a turbo-alternator which, acting through a series of snickets, worples, and mezzlicks, controls the operation. What happens if a snicket and a worple get out of gear I don't know, probably the whole 150 records flop into the centre of the room in a body without previous warning. I am also not quite clear as to whether one has to buy 150 records all at once to make the thing work. With a bit of good luck, this method may well be as exciting as the other three.

In conclusion, I shall be delighted to offer my services free to any trade dealers who may have systems not reviewed above. If they will send me, free of charge, and carriage paid, a sample of their particular method, I will send it round the paddock for a morning gallop, test it with a hygrometer and seismograph, and report further on the subject in a later issue, with the Editor's permission. Sufficient has, however, been said to enable any reader possessing an intelligence equal to that of an average rabbit to choose the method he or she prefers, due regard being paid to the state of the patient's nerves. If the temperature is not more than 100° Centigrade or less than 212° Fahrenheit, and the pulse going at not more than 3,000 revs. per min., any of the methods enumerated may be safely adopted.

SCRUTATOR.



## PART SONGS

By Dr. FRANCIS H. MEAD (California)

AMONG the Harleian MSS, in the British Museum, is a copy on parchment of the earliest English part-song known—a Rota or Round—"Sumer is acumen in, sing cu-cu." The composition is attributed to John of Fornsete, a monk of the Abbey of Reading (c. 1226) (Victor 35279B, with the *Willow Song*, on the reverse with it, and the apocryphal *Hymn to Apollo* on the obverse). This round (of which a facsimile and full history can be found in Grove's Dictionary) is sung by the Victor mixed choir, and is interesting as one of the originals of part singing. From this early example we pass on in recorded madrigals, to the very delightful series of the end of the sixteenth and commencement of the seventeenth centuries, the Elizabethan madrigals, as sung by the English Singers. The first set of these I obtained I confess I was somewhat disappointed with the recording, but the later issues have been very much better. If one may judge from a recent catalogue re-issues are contemplated under the new method of recording. Among the first sent out were *Now is the month of Maying* (1600), Morley, 1557-1603; the very delightful *Silver Swan* (1612), Gibbons, 1583-1626; *Sing we at pleasure* (1601), Weelkes; *Lullabye, my sweet baby*, Byrd, 1542-1623; *Since first I saw your face* (1607), Ford; *Flora gave me fairest flowers* (1599), Wilbye; *On the plains fairy trains* (1601), Weelkes—the latter a very beautiful and quaint madrigal, but rather faintly recorded. Later issues are *What is our life?* (1612), Gibbons; *When David heard* (1622), Tomkins (a madrigal very like an anthem); *In going to my lonely bed* (1560), Edwards; *Fair Phyllis I saw* (1599), Farmer; *All creatures now*, Benet, 1599-1644; *Cupid in a bed of roses*, Bateson, C.1618; *Stay Corydon, thou swain* (1599), Wilbye; *This sweet and merry month of May* (1611), Byrd; *Though Amaryllis dance* (1588), Byrd; *Come to me Grief for ever* (1588), Byrd (from "the funeral songs of that honourable gent, Sir Phillip Sidney, Knight"); and lastly, *Why do I use my paper, ink, and pen?* (1588), Byrd. This certainly is a marvellous and valued collection which the H.M.V. Co. have given us. A word on playing them. You cannot appreciate these very interesting madrigals unless you obtain the words and music of each one, and follow them as you play. They are published inexpensively, and may be obtained through Stainer and Bell, 58, Berners Street, W. 1, or from Novello. From the complicated nature of the fugues, etc., the words are not intelligible, but with the scores the records have an entirely new interest and value. Again the H.M.V. Co. have given us several delightful quartets sung by the admirable Gresham Singers. *Matona, lovely maiden* (O. Lassus, 1520-94) one of the earliest, and among others

the old English folk-song, *Early one morning*, arranged for four voices. The Victorian Glee Makers are well represented—Hatton, Stainer, Horsley, Sullivan, Beale, Bishop, and others, not forgetting Elgar's two superb part songs from the Greek anthologies—*Feasting I watch* and *After many a dusty mile*. Again in these the music is easily and inexpensively obtained, and a copy should accompany every record.

The Greshams seem to have eclipsed the Minster Singers, of whom we have too few records. Some years ago a set of sea shanties were issued by them, these from recent catalogues would seem to have been dropped. Shanties are coming into fashion again. In the following list the nautical directions after each record were given me by an old naval captain who had heard them sung (not necessarily the drawing-room versions sung by the Minster Singers) on board ships. *Capstan Bar* (tightening the weather brace), *Whiskey Johnny* (hauling home the main tack), *Shenandoah* (one of the best of the shanties, capstan song, lifting anchor), *Blow, my bully boys* (hoisting yards), *Sally Brown* (hauling up reef, reefing topsail), *Rio Grande* (hoisting yards), *Blow the man down* (hauling down the main sheet and hoisting yards). All these shanties are very loud and in an ordinary room require to be played with an extra fine needle. The Minster Singers also gave us three of the Scott Gatty plantation songs—*Click-clack*, *De ole banjo*, and *Good Night*, all with a banjo accompaniment very well played, and strictly appropriate, and in good taste. The best rendition I ever heard of Foster's *Massa's in de cold ground* filled out the fourth side. All H.M.V., but questionable if now in print.

It would seem to be a long distance from these selections to the Negro "Spirituals," which have been brought so recently to the front by Roland Hayes and other singers, but they are essentially part songs. First of these let me mention *Deep River* (Victor 64687), sung by Frances Alda and the Orpheus Quartet, and then pass to the Fiske Jubilee Singers. Here we have the real negroes singing in their characteristic way the interesting emotional songs, with the fervid beliefs of future assured happiness in the beyond. All are Victor records, not apparently catalogued in the H.M.V. list, but easily procurable through this company. With the Stephen Foster songs they summarise the only folk music the United States has to offer.

The selection of records is: *Good news*, *Wasn't that a wide river?*, *In bright mansions above*, *The ole ark* (very quaint), *Brethren rise, shine* (a wonderful air), *P'o mo'ner's got a home at last*, *The great camp meeting*, *There is a balm in Gilead*, *My soul is a witness*, *Swing low, sweet chariot*, *Golden slippers* (not the popular song of that name), *Roll, Jordan roll*, *I couldn't hear nobody pray*, *Little David play on yo' harp*,



*Shout all over God's heaven* (distinctly humorous—"every body talks about heaven ain't a going there"), *Oh reign Massa Jesus reign*, and the pathetic *Most done travellin'*. To these is added, by the same singers, a quartet arrangement of Foster's *Old Black Joe*. Every record is well sung, unaccompanied, and the deeper voices are remarkable. In contrast with these, though with one exception not quite so good, are the records by the Tuskegee Negro Singers. The best I have found are *Been a listenin'*, *Good Lord I done, done, I want to be ready*, *Get on board*, *Swing low, sweet chariot* (very different in its rendering to the Fiske record), and lastly one of the most beautiful of all the negro spirituals—*Steal away*.

These are with possibly a few isolated exceptions, such as the Shakespeare song from *As you like it*, *Blow, blow, thou winter wind* (Stevens), sung by Raymond Dixon and a male quartet (Victor 17717B.) a very satisfactory record—all one can mention of recorded part songs.

We could wish we had as separate records all the madrigals from the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, as representing modern madrigal writing.

Although not strictly a "part song," of course, one must never forget the rendition of Liza Lehmann's *Persian Garden*—old H.M.V. records, but always as enjoyable and wonderful as ever.

F. H. MEAD, M.D.



## On Hearing Holst's "Neptune"

(COLUMBIA L.1542.)

Jostling, shapeless, loose and dark,  
Prenatal atoms.  
Pain and blood and quivering mud,  
And one great pain of love.  
In a fierce ripple of sound  
The living ground  
Seethes liquidly.

Night flows fluidly;  
Shrill spheres, coagulating moons revolve,  
Birth and dissolution mixed.

Pain and blood,  
A hard, thin cry,  
A watery, stagnant brood,  
And the mountains, and the things that fly,  
The trees, the grass,  
And You and I.

ARIEL FALSTAFF.



## THE ELUSIVE GRAMOPHONE

By "EXTORRIS" (Borneo)

EARLY last year (1926) appeared in an American scientific journal an article on "Electrical Research Applied to the Phonograph."—

"By designing the acoustic transmission system as the analogy of the proper electrical system, vibrations up to five thousand cycles per second can be passed through . . .

"In the new talking machine a much larger horn than those used in the past has been incorporated and has been designed to fit into a cabinet. The horn is folded on itself and by making the bends at places where the sound path is narrow it has been possible to effect this folding and still maintain the correct design.

"The improvements which have resulted are quite marked. First and most striking is the reproduction of the bass and the higher harmonics. The reproduction of the bass, that is, the lower frequencies, adds 'body and weight' to the music which has been missing in the past, while the reproduction of the higher harmonics introduces a definition or detail which has also been lacking . . . It has produced the illusion that the artist whose record is being listened to is right out in the room with the listener" ("right out" is Americanese for present).

This article impressed the writer, and he wrote to the editor of the publication in question asking where such a machine could be purchased.

With kindly and becoming reticence the American editor replied to the effect that though unprepared to give the secret away, so to speak, he had forwarded the letter to the makers and left it to them to answer.

A mail later arrived a letter from a well-known firm to say how pleased they were to get the enquiry, but as they thought it would be more convenient for their English firm to deal with they were sending the letter to the makers for the English market.

A few weeks later the English firm wrote that they had forwarded the letter to Calcutta, whence their manager would doubtless send particulars and quotations as to price, etc.

In due season came a letter from Calcutta enclosing an illustration of a machine totally different, whose main advantage apparently is that it does not possess a horn or any kind of resonating chamber, but flicks the sound straight off a kind of frying-pan arrangement (I hope this is clear to your readers). Furthermore came the usual announcement that they were forwarding the letter—in this case to Singapore—but they were kind enough to anticipate a disappointment by saying they did not know if their Singapore agents stocked the machine in question.

The Singapore agents have evidently received a nasty jar, so to say, as in the three months that have elapsed they have been unable to think of anywhere to forward the original letter, which perhaps by this time is suffering from atomic dissolution. Nor has any communication been received from them.

There is an old nursery tale concerning "The stick (which) began to beat the dog, the dog began to bite the pig, the pig began to get over the stile, and so the old woman got home."

The old woman was to be congratulated as she did eventually get there, but the writer is "no forrarder" and getting older every day.

"EXTORRIS."



## TRANSLATIONS

(Contributed by H. F. V. LITTLE)

DER JÜNGLING AN DER QUELLE  
(The Youth at the Spring)

(Schubert.)

Claire Dux, Polydor 70688, 10in., d.s., red.

Leise, rieselnder Quell' !  
*Be silent, thou rippling spring,*  
 Ihr wallenden, flispernden Pappeln !  
*Ye swaying and whispering Poplars !*  
 Euer Schlummergeräusch  
*Your murmuring lullaby*  
 Wecket die Liebe mir auf.  
*Stirreth love once more in me.*  
 Linderung sucht' ich bei euch,  
*To ye I came for relief,*  
 Und sie zu vergessen, die Spröde,  
*To forget her, the cold-hearted maiden,*  
 :| Ach—und Blätter und Bach  
*Ah—but the leaves and the spring*  
 Seufzen " Louise " dir nach. |:  
*Breathe forth " Louise " to thee.*  
 Geliebte, Geliebte !  
*Dearest, dearest !*

## DER WANDERER (The Wanderer)

Poem by Schmidt von Lübeck. Music by Schubert, Op. 4, No. 1 (modified).

Radford, H.M.V., D.272, 12in., d.s., black.  
 Knüpf, H.M.V., D.807, 12in., d.s., black.  
 Bender, Polydor 65575, 12in., d.s., black.  
 Groenen, Polydor 66141, 12in., d.s., black.

Ich komme vom Gebirge her.  
*I come from the mountains.*  
 Es dampft das Tal, :| es braust das Meer. |:  
*The valley steams, the ocean roars.*  
 Ich wand'le still, bin wenig froh,  
*I wander in silence, far from happy,*  
 Und immer fragt der Seufzer " Wo ? " immer " Wo ? "  
*Always sighing and asking " Where ? " always, " Where ? "*  
 Die Sonne dünkt mich hier so kalt,  
*The sun seems here so cold to me,*  
 Die Blüte welk, das Leben alt,  
*The flowers withered, life seems old,*  
 Und was sie reden, leerer Schall.  
*And what they utter, empty sound.*  
 Ich bin ein Fremdling überall.  
*I am a stranger everywhere.*  
 :| Wo bist du, |: mein geliebtes Land ?  
*Where art thou, my beloved land ?*  
 Gesucht, geahnt und nie gekannt !  
*Sought for, dreamt of, but never found !*  
 Das Land, das Land :| so hoffnungsgrün, |:  
*That land, that land so bright with hope,*  
 Das Land wo meine Rosen bluh'n,  
*That land in which my roses bloom,*  
 Wo meine Freunde wandelnd geh'n,  
*Where my friends go roaming,*

Wo meine Toten aufersteh'n,  
*Where my dead come to life,*  
 Das Land das meine Sprache spricht ;  
*That land where my speech is spoken ;*  
 O Land, wo bist du ?  
*O land, where art thou ?*  
 Ich wand'le still, bin wenig froh,  
*I wander in silence, far from happy,*  
 Und immer fragt der Seufzer " Wo ? "  
*Ever sighing and asking " Where ? "*  
 Immer " Wo ? "  
 In Geisterhauch tönt's mir zurück,  
*A spirit-voice replies to me,*  
 " Dort, wo du nicht bist, dort ist das Glück."  
*" Yonder, where thou art not, yonder is happiness."*

## DER NEUGIERIGE

Poem by Wilhelm Müller. Music by Schubert, Op. 25, No. 6.  
Leo Slezak, Polydor 62422, 10in., d.s., black.

Ich frage keine Blume,  
*I'll question not a flower,*  
 Ich frage keinen Stern,  
*I'll question not a star,*  
 Sie können mir alle nicht sagen,  
*Not all of them can tell me*  
 Was ich erfähr' so gern.  
*What I'd so like to know.*  
 Ich bin ja auch kein Gärtner,  
*Besides, I'm not a gardener,*  
 Die Sterne steh'n zu hoch ;  
*The stars are all too high ;*  
 Mein Bächlein will ich fragen  
*My streamlet I will ask*  
 Ob mich mein Herz belog.  
*If my heart has lied to me.*  
 O Bächlein, meiner Liebe,  
*Oh streamlet, my dear streamlet,*  
 Wie bist du heut' so stumm !  
*How dumb you are to-day !*  
 Will ja nur Eines wissen,  
*I wish to know just one thing,*  
 :| Ein Wörtchen um und um. |:  
*In one small word 'twill go.*  
 " Ja " heisst das eine Wörtchen,  
*" Yes " that little word is,*  
 Das and're heisset " Nein,"  
*Another one is " No,"*  
 :| Die beiden Wörtchen schliessen  
*These tiny words between them*  
 Die ganze Welt mir ein. |:  
*Hold all the world for me.*  
 O Bächlein, meiner Liebe,  
*Oh streamlet, my dear streamlet,*  
 Was bist du wunderbar !  
*Your mood is rather odd !*  
 Will's ja nicht weiter sagen,  
*I'll not repeat it further,*  
 :| Sag', Bächlein, liebt sie mich ? |:  
*Say, streamlet, does she love me ?*





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- 1739 {WHERE DO YOU WORK-A JOHN? Vocal Chorus. One Step.  
I don't mind being all alone. Fox Trot.
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Oh! Marie. One Step

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